

1921 Movement : Reminiscences

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Foreword by

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PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Price : Rs. 11.00
£. 1.05
\$*. 3.30

PUBLISHED BY THE DIRECTOR, PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, PATIALA HOUSE, NEW DELHI-1

Regional Offices :

BOTAWALA CHAMBERS, SIR PHEROZESHAH MEHTA ROAD
BOMBAY-1

AKASHVANI BHAVAN, EDEN GARDENS, CALCUTTA-1
SHASTRI BHAVAN, 35, HALDOWNS ROAD, MADRAS-6

PRINTED AT NAVIN PRESS, UNIT No. 2
OKHLA INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, NEW DELHI-20

FOREWORD

I AM HAPPY that the Publications Division is bringing out a commemorative volume in English and Hindi to mark the 50th anniversary of the non-cooperation movement launched by the Congress in 1921 under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

When I returned to India in 1916 after my studies in law in the United Kingdom, my basic philosophy was that India could win its freedom only by adopting violent methods to overthrow the British. In fact, even when I met Gandhiji in England earlier in August 1914 while he was returning to India from South Africa, I and many others who met him informed him of our firm conviction that we should not extend any co-operation to the British in their war effort and that "England's difficulty was India's opportunity".

After Gandhiji came on the Indian scene, he felt, and rightly so, that India should adopt passive resistance, a non-violent struggle, against the British. On August 1, 1920, the day Tilak passed away, Gandhiji declared that non-violent non-cooperation with the British should be the approach and that alone would make the British realise

the need for the giving up of their supremacy over India. In the special session of the Congress held in Calcutta in 1920 (which I had the privilege of attending), the question of non-cooperation was debated at considerable length. Many of the leaders, notably C.R. Das from Bengal, Lajpat Rai from the Punjab, Annie Besant and Mohammad Ali Jinnah, all opposed it and only Pandit Motilal Nehru sided with Gandhiji. The bitterest opposition to Gandhiji's approach came from the followers of Tilak.

Gandhiji's programme was simple. He advocated the triple boycott of the impending elections, under the Government of India Act of 1919, of Government schools and colleges and of law courts. Surprisingly almost two-thirds of the electors stayed away from the polls held in November 1920. This showed the increasing influence of Gandhiji. So much so, that when the Congress held its regular session at Nagpur in 1920, non-cooperation became the official Congress policy and the watchword of the people, and all those who had opposed him earlier joined him wholeheartedly. This novel method of political action rallied round itself millions of people and drew persons not only from the upper and the middle class but also from the poorer sections embracing the rural and the urban population in the country.

At the Ahmedabad Congress held in December 1921, Gandhiji became the chosen leader of the people. Initially the response was not very encouraging; the Khilafat movement, however, provided an impetus and during the last months of 1921 and in the beginning of 1922, civil disobedience became a nationwide movement. Further, Gandhiji emphasised the picketing of toddy shops to strengthen the cause of prohibition. He also wanted that the Government should introduce this and stop the manufacture and sale of all alcoholic drinks. This naturally meant the Government losing a huge source of revenue. The civil disobedience movement gathered momentum and the picketing of toddy shops spread throughout the

country. Himself believing in the weapons of non-violence and truth, Gandhiji stressed that sufficient notice should be given to the Governmental authorities of our intention to break the laws and that we should willingly submit ourselves to any suffering.

For the first time, people in the country were emboldened and further prepared themselves to undergo any suffering and sacrifice. They were ready to face long-term imprisonment and even the fear of the gallows was gone. This was a novel warfare—non-violence against violence and suffering without protest. While in the beginning the British felt that the movement would not attract a large number of persons, when they saw the movement getting stronger and stronger, they were worried. They started arresting persons and sentencing them to various terms of imprisonment. I responded to the call of Gandhiji and I was one of the first few to give up practice. In the district of Ganjam (my home town), the response was excellent and as many as 350 people courted arrest and were sentenced to imprisonment ranging from three months to one year. In my own family more than a dozen members courted arrest—I, my brother, my sister, cousins and many others. Our share was perhaps a little more than that of others because all of us, including my esteemed father, were active political leaders in our district from the very beginning!

Jail-going was, indeed, a new experience, perhaps in a sense a very unwholesome one; for, all prisoners—be they convicts or political prisoners—were all clubbed together and treated alike and were given the same food, jail clothes. No distinction was made between political prisoners and ordinary convicts. I saw for myself that many of my good friends, accustomed to a certain comfortable way of living, could not adjust themselves to the new atmosphere. However, with my background of political and trade union work in Ireland, I did not suffer any such difficulty. The food that was supplied was unwhole-

some. While I had no difficulty because of my association with the working class, many of my co-prisoners felt miserable and remained starved for days together. Some of us felt that we must make the jail authorities realise that such a callous treatment would not be borne patiently. While it might, perhaps, not have been liked by Gandhiji, we organised a hunger strike. Though in the first instance the jail authorities and the Government which had never experienced this kind of agitation refused point-blank our demands, when actually they saw that we meant business and all the civil disobedience prisoners went on a hunger strike at Berhampur jail, they contacted the provincial Government and also there were threats of hartals at Berhampur in sympathy with the striking prisoners. Ultimately, the jail authorities had to yield and improve the position. To weaken the morale and also to reduce our forces, the authorities dispersed the prisoners to various places, but whatever they did, it only helped to spread our message and similar threats were given in other jails also by the prisoners and the conditions improved. Finally, this resulted in the improvement of the treatment of ordinary convicts also and made the jail authorities give up many corrupt practices.

All the latter calls given by Gandhiji to have a non-violent struggle against the British found their genesis in the civil disobedience movement of 1921. The acts of the British rulers and their attempts to put down the spirit of nationalism only evoked an intense patriotism among the people and a greater urge to serve the cause of freedom. The fear of incarceration and the threat of punishment and even of the gallows were totally shaken off and the whole nation stood as one man to sacrifice everything, ready to do or die for the independence of the nation. Non-cooperation had made Gandhiji an undisputed leader and the tide of nationalism began to spread in every nook and corner of the country. The myth of breaking down people through suppression and punishment was totally exploded.

What Panditji said when he was tried at that time found an echo in every heart. This is what he said: "I shall go to jail again most willingly and joyfully. Jail has, indeed, become a haven for us, a place of pilgrimage....One feels almost lonely outside."

राष्ट्रपति भवन, नई दिल्ली-4

Rashtrapati Bhavan

New Delhi-4

W. G. Rice

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The Story of the First Unarmed Revolt

T A R A C H A N D

THE URGE FOR freedom is natural. Even when a people by their folly lose this precious gift and through blind selfishness and short-sighted ambition pass under the domination of another race, the urge is muted, but not destroyed. From the middle of the eighteenth century the civil wars, dynastic feuds and treacherous betrayals forced Indian princes and ruling families to accept one after another the yoke of British rule. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the entire country had fallen into the status of dependence and subjection.

But the irrepressible will to independence manifested itself from time to time and on a vast tumultuous scale in 1857. The failure of the Revolt riveted the bonds of slavery on the Indian mind. It impressed upon it the sense of Indian inferiority, and the unshakable supremacy of the British. It loosened mutual trust, weakened self-confidence and impelled the different elements of Indian society to narrow views and particular interests.

Nevertheless discontent largely based on a feeling of humiliation engendered by the arrogance of the rulers continued to stimulate the mood of rebellion. It was impossible to deny the promptings of nature and to acquiesce permanently in the role of slavery.

The early expression of this inherent desire for freedom took the form of a probe, a hesitant self-assertion. Its organ was the Indian National Congress. As years passed, firmness, confidence and self-reliance grew. The partition of Bengal created the occasion for the exercise of these qualities. How to dedicate one's life to the cause of the country, to defy fearlessly the might of the Government and to prepare fighters for freedom—these were the fruits of this wonderful uprising.

The Government made plans to meet the growing menace to its existence by resort to three instruments—repression

of radicals, dissensions among the ranks of nationalists and conciliation of compromisers. Severe laws accompanied by ruthless execution, encouragement of communal differences, and rallying of the Moderates and the landed gentry formed the three-pronged policy of the Government. The Press was gagged, patriots were jailed or exiled, students and teachers were punished. The rulers of the princely states were befriended, the Muslims favoured and communal jealousies and fears excited. Schemes of constitutional reform which transferred little real power to the people were placed on the statute book in order to win the co-operation of cautious politicians.

But in spite of the strenuous endeavours of the Government in the pursuit of their aims, success was temporary. For, the end of World War I found the country restless and bitter. The war had been unexpectedly prolonged. It exercised a great strain upon tempers, and brought untold misery. The economic world order was completely upset, and economic hardships were considerably multiplied. World trade was wholly disorganised and industry geared to purposes of war. Prices spiralled and the Indian agriculturist was impoverished.

In the concluding years of the war, the failure of the monsoon, the diminution of food supplies and increase of unemployment worsened living conditions. Over and above these calamities there came the epidemic of influenza which wrought havoc. Millions fell victim to the fell epidemic.

In the field of politics, Indians as a whole and the Muslim community in particular were adversely affected by the course of events inside the country and outside. So far as foreign affairs were concerned, in the war between the entente powers —the U.S.A., the U.K., France and Russia—and Germany, Italy, Austria and Turkey, the scales were tilted against the latter. Turkey's defeat and disintegration were a cause of deep concern to the Indian Muslims who regarded the Sultan as the Caliph or religious head of all the Sunni Muslims. He was the guardian of their holy places and the defender of the faith. The Muslims naturally resented the treatment meted out to the Ottoman Empire. Their bitterness was specially directed against Britain which appeared as the principal enemy of the world Muslim brotherhood. What was worse, the British statesmen had given pledges which were shamelessly broken.

Inside the country the people were sore and dissatisfied.

Their loyalty was heavily strained and was fast disappearing. Early in the war India's war effort was lauded and it appeared as if the status of the country would soon undergo a change. On August 20, 1917, a proclamation was issued promising progressive realisation of responsible government as the goal of India's political advance. The Act of 1919, however, caused widespread disappointment.

But even before the Montagu-Chelmsford Act was placed on the statute book, the suspicious and guilty-minded Government began to devise measures to avert what it believed was coming—agitation, resistance and defiance. It appointed a commission under Judge Rowlatt of England to enquire into seditious activities in India and to suggest remedies.

Bills were placed before the Legislative Assembly embodying the recommendations of the Rowlatt Commission. They sought to confer the extraordinary powers of arrest and search and of trial according to a procedure which was tantamount to denial of justice.

The Government was warned of the evil consequences of the brutal measure. The highly respected Moderate leader, Srinivasa Sastri, said: "The possession in the hands of the executive of the powers of this drastic nature will not only hurt the wicked. It will hurt the good as well as the bad, and there will be such a lowering of spirits, there will be such a lowering of political tone in the country, that all your talk of responsible government will be a mockery."

Jinnah, President of the Muslim League, admonished the Government in these words: "The passage of the bill will create a discontent and agitation the like of which has never been witnessed before."

The Indian Press was unanimous in expressing its indignation at the proposed measure. But nothing seemed to move the bureaucracy from its baneful resolve. The Government majority passed the bill and placed it on the statute book.

The utter heedlessness of public opinion was a sure invitation to trouble. India's self-respect demanded a suitable reply to the challenge of the Government. The haughty behaviour of the power-drunk rulers was bound to provoke the ire of the nation which was no longer prepared to submit to insults and oppression in a docile spirit.

Gandhiji took up the gauntlet, and behind him marched a resolute people to defend their honour and to vindicate their

natural right to freedom.

While the opposition to the Act was countrywide, conditions in the Punjab were explosive for many reasons. Pressure had been used to recruit soldiers for war—3,00,000 combatants and 60,000 non-combatants—and many villages were deprived of labouring and earning men. Agrarian distress had led to restlessness and outrages which had been crushed with a heavy hand. Many Punjabi emigrants had returned to their homes with bitter feelings against the Government, which used the provisions of the Ingress Ordinance to prosecute them.

Gandhiji's Leadership

Gandhiji had returned to India early in 1915 from South Africa where he had led an extraordinary movement of the Indian settlers for the vindication of their national honour and human rights. The experiences of this non-violent, ethically-guided struggle had moulded the contours of his philosophy. The central principle which governed his thought and action was that man was in essence divine and the whole purpose of life was to realise his divinity in conduct, individual and collective. Religion, philosophy, ethics, social science, economics, politics, theory and practice—all must contribute to this one supreme purpose, self-realisation. According to Gandhiji, the reality of the purpose is expressed in two words—truth and non-violence. Truth is the core of individuality, man's identity with the highest and innermost being. Non-violence is the basic principle of the human community, that which binds men into unity.

He judged all institutions and all strivings for progress in the light of these ideas. Independence of the country, was necessary, for without individual liberty secured through a self-governing state, the necessary conditions for substantiating truth and non-violence could not be created. Thus Gandhiji's primary interest lay in the transformation of man into a moral being, in overcoming what he had inherited through evolution from his natural ancestry by a principle which transcended nature.

This was the religion which he translated into practice in South Africa and which he endeavoured to propagate in India in moral, social, economic and political life. His advent in Indian politics was the opening of a new chapter in its history.

He arrived in India in January 1915, after an absence of nearly a quarter century with short occasional visits to the country. He followed the advice of Gokhale to spend one quiet year to familiarise himself with the actual condition of the country. He established a Satyagraha Ashram on the banks of the Sabarmati river near Ahmedabad. His first venture in the political field was undertaken in aid of the immediate abolition of the evil indenture system of recruiting labourers for the British colonies. Public agitation and fear of satyagraha persuaded the Viceroy to order the abolition of the system from April 12, 1917.

He then turned his attention to the grievances of the cultivators oppressed by the indigo planters of Bihar. He proceeded to Champaran in order to conduct an enquiry. But the District Magistrate served on him an order to leave the district immediately. Gandhiji refused to obey and was tried for defiance. He pleaded guilty to the charge of disobeying the order, but he justified his action on the ground that human authority must yield before the higher authority of conscience. It was a new plea in a court of law. But not altogether so, for in history men like Socrates and religious saints and martyrs had taken this line to justify their action before. But for the British magistrate utterly unused to such a procedure, the plea was staggering. The Government of Bihar came to his rescue and Gandhiji was allowed to carry on his investigations. Ultimately the Government recognised the enormity of the indigo planters' oppression and the Champaran Agrarian Bill of 1917 proposed the abolition of the system.

Gandhiji was still at work in Bihar when he received requests to help and guide the peasants of Kheda who were finding difficulties in paying rents owing to failure of crops. The second request was to intervene in a labour trouble in Ahmedabad. He took up the question of the mill-hands of Ahmedabad first. He advised the workers to strike but to observe non-violence against both millowners and blacklegs, and to remain firm. Unfortunately after two weeks they began to waver, so Gandhiji announced that he would go on a fast till the strike was settled. This confirmed the workers in their resolve, and touched the heart of the millowners. The strike ended with a settlement satisfactory to both parties.

Then he plunged into the Kheda struggle, which ended in a compromise. Gandhiji felt that it was not satisfactory, but it marked the beginning of an awakening among the

peasants of Gujarat.¹

These incidents were like the flapping of wings before the start of his flight into high empyrean. Gandhiji happened casually to read in the papers the Rowlatt Committee's report, which had been published. He exclaimed: "Its recommendations startled me." This was the beginning of the transformation from a loyal citizen of the Empire who had so far believed "that the Empire has been on the whole a power for good", into an extreme rebel whose new creed was: "The British Empire today represents satanism, and they who love God can afford to have no love for Satan."

The change in such a high-souled, scrupulously truth-loving person marked the final stage in the destruction of the moral foundations of the British Empire in India. Gandhiji represented the conscience of India and the revolt in his mind was the starting-point in the revolution which culminated in the end of the Empire.

His immediate reaction was to draft a pledge which committed those who followed him and were convinced "that the bills were unjust, subversive of all principles of liberty and justice and destructive of the elementary rights of an individual, to refuse civilly to obey those laws in the event of those bills becoming law and until they were withdrawn".²

Meanwhile the bill had become an Act, the pledge was followed by a call for a hartal (suspension of economic activity) on an all-India scale. The date was first fixed as March 30, 1919, but subsequently changed to April 6. It was to be a day of fasting and prayer, the day on which India opened the non-violent war against British imperialism. Gandhiji wrote to the Viceroy, "The satyagraha campaign constitutes an attempt to revolutionise politics and restore moral force to its original position."

The response to the call was amazing. Towns and villages in every part of the country vied with one another to make the hartal a success, to demonstrate that a common feeling stirred the hearts of all Indians. A new confidence was born, and it was the beginning of a new era.

Gandhiji noted, "The whole of India from one end to

¹Gandhi, M.K., *An Autobiography* (1948), p. 538

²*The Bombay Chronicle*, March 2, 1919 (Bamford, P.C., *Histories of the Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements*, p. 4)

the other, towns as well as villages, observed a complete hartal on this day. It was a wonderful spectacle."¹

In Delhi the Satyagraha Day was observed on March 30. Scenes of unprecedented enthusiasm were witnessed. Hindus and Muslims joined in the demonstrations. Swami Shraddhanand, an eminent Arya Samaj leader, was invited to address the Muslims gathered in the great mosque, Jama Masjid. A huge procession marched through the streets. The fraternisation of the Hindus and Muslims and the excitement in the masses were portents of danger in the eyes of the authorities. The only method known to them for dealing with such a phenomenon was to try and suppress it by force. Police obstruction, rioting, violence and shooting were the inevitable results.

In Bombay, where Gandhiji himself was present, immense crowds gathered on the Chowpati beach and marched through the city without any incident. Gandhiji and Sarojini Naidu made speeches in a mosque. Gandhiji's books on which the Government had placed a ban were openly sold in defiance of orders.

Unfortunately at Ahmedabad and some other places in Gujarat, disturbances broke out.

But the worst was to happen in the Punjab. After the Delhi incident Gandhiji wanted to visit the city to investigate the causes of the trouble. But orders were issued banning his entry into Delhi. He was forced to return to Bombay and to remain in the Presidency. The news spread that he was arrested and excited passions and anger.

Amritsar Tragedy

The Punjab which had done most in contributing to the war effort was the most adversely affected of the provinces. In addition it had the misfortune of being ruled by Michael O'Dwyer, one of the worst specimens of Morley's Tchinovniks. The Rowlatt bills had, as it were, sprinkled salt over its wounds. It brooked "no vakil, no appeal, no *dalil* (argument)",² and threatened every public worker with dire consequences at the bidding of officers like O'Dwyer.

¹Gandhi, M.K., *An Autobiography*, p. 563.

²Bamford, P.C., *Histories of the Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements*, p. 10

As the strains and stresses were greater in the Punjab, the agitation was more extensive and intensive there than in any other province. There was greater fervour, more strident emotions, larger gatherings of crowds, and all this tended to rowdy demonstrations, alarm of authorities and frequent clashes. The Punjab had achieved a reputation for turbulence since the agrarian troubles of 1907. The conditions had greatly deteriorated since then. The province was writhing under a sense of deep frustration and Gandhiji's call had an electrifying effect upon the people.

Already many meetings of protest had taken place all over the province. On April 6 hartals were observed in Lahore and other towns. The Governor reacted fiercely. He told the provincial Legislative Council in a minatory speech: "I, therefore, take this opportunity of warning all who are connected with political movements in the province that they will be held responsible for the proper conduct of meetings which they organise, for the language used at, and the consequences that follow from, such meetings."¹

The Tribune stigmatised it as blazing indiscretion.

On April 10 on receipt of the news of Gandhiji's arrest, a procession was taken out at Lahore. The police fired upon the student processionists. A crowd and a meeting were subjected to shooting. Three local leaders were deported.

But what happened at Lahore pales into insignificance compared with the horrors at Amritsar. Here protest meetings had started in February. On March 23 was held a meeting in support of the satyagraha movement, followed by another after six days to announce and explain the hartal on the 30th.

The immediate reaction of the authorities was to prohibit one of the leaders, Satya Pal, from speaking in public. This did not frighten the citizens and on the 30th a hartal was observed and a meeting held in Jallianwala Bagh. On April 4 another leader, Saifuddin Kitchlew, was served with a similar notice, and a number of others were restrained. On the 6th a complete hartal was observed but peace was maintained. The Deputy Commissioner was chagrined and immediately asked for additional military force. On April 9 there was a Hindu festival and large processions of Hindus,

¹*Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Punjab, 1919, Vol. X, pp. 290-91*

Muslims and Sikhs milled through the streets.

Gandhiji, who at the invitation of the leaders was travelling to the Punjab, was stopped at Palwal and prohibited from entering the province.

The next morning (April 10), Kitchlew and Satya Pal were deported from Amritsar. The two incidents infuriated and provoked the people. Mobs gathered to see the Deputy Commissioner and entreat him to cancel the orders. The military pickets tried to stop them from moving towards the Deputy Commissioner's house. The mounted soldiers then fired on the crowd causing some deaths and wounding a number of people. The mob was infuriated. There was a melee, firing took place from the one side and stone-throwing from the other. More crowds gathered and were hailed with bullets. Then the maddened mob broke all bounds, brutal acts of destruction—arson, plunder and murder—followed. O'Dwyer in depriving Amritsar of its leaders pledged to non-violence had sown the wind and India reaped the whirlwind—the massacre of innocents.

Amritsar was handed over to the military authorities on the 11th and Brigadier Dyer took charge the same night. Proclamations were issued on April 12 and 13 giving warning of dire consequences if meetings were held or processions taken out and violence indulged in.

The reaction of the people was to make a protest against these threats. A meeting was summoned at the Jallianwala Bagh on the afternoon of April 13. Dyer regarded it as a challenge to his authority and decided to disperse it by force to make an example and teach a lesson.

The Jallianwala Bagh was an open enclosure surrounded by buildings with only one narrow entrance through which even an armoured car could not pass. There were three or four small openings on the other side. In this enclosure, according to various estimates, fifteen to twenty-five thousand people had gathered. They were peacefully listening to the speeches of the leaders when Dyer and his men appeared at the main gate. Dyer immediately deployed his troops and without any warning opened fire. Men fell dead in hundreds, many were crushed in the blind stampede that ensued. The dead piled up, the wounded lay in agony groaning and crying for water, but the firing continued till ammunition was exhausted. Dyer then moved away from the slaughter house proudly surveying his

handiwork, unconcerned about the dead and the wounded.

The exact figures of the killed and the injured will never be known. Whether 379—which was the official version—died, or one thousand, is irrelevant. The fact is that while the Government in England was announcing its intention to train Indians for self-government through political reforms, its agents in India were actually giving Indians lessons in terror to develop the qualities of servility, cowardice, hypocrisy and sycophancy.

Punjab Wrongs

The Jallianwala Bagh massacre was not an isolated incident. It was only one among the large number of instances of the general policy of terrorising the people pursued in the Punjab. In Amritsar the massacre was followed by clamping down curfew which remained in force for two months. What was worse, water and electricity supply was cut off. Flogging and whipping were common and an order was given that anyone passing through the lane in which an Englishwoman, Miss Sherwood, had been assaulted, should crawl through it on his belly. Numerous people were tried under the martial law proclaimed on April 13, a large number were sentenced—many to death, others to transportation for life or to various terms of imprisonment.

At Lahore a procession was fired upon thrice on the 10th and again on the 17th. On the 16th three respected leaders of Lahore—Rambhaj Dutt Chowdhury, Harkishen Lal and Duni Chand—were invited to the Deputy Commissioner's house, arrested and deported. Martial law was declared and the hartal broken by military force. The martial law regime from April 15 to May 29 was a horrid tale of atrocious dealings—commandeering of transport, stopping of free distribution of food to the needy, conviction by summary courts, imprisonment, stripes, public flogging, marching students 26 km a day in the hot midday sun of May, etc. Even so eminent a scholar as the Minto Professor of Economics in the Calcutta University, Manohar Lal, was thrown into prison without cause, all with the deliberate purpose of humiliating and terrorising the people.

In Kasur (near Lahore and Amritsar) on April 13 the mob excited by the news from Amritsar committed arson and plunder. The authorities proclaimed martial law. The horrors

of Lahore and Amritsar were repeated. The military officer in charge exercised great ingenuity and imposed fancy punishments.

At Gujranwala bombs were thrown on a boarding-house, machine-guns were fired into villages and in the city to produce a "moral effect". Indiscriminate arrests were made and people were subjected to humiliation, flogging and many indignities.

The gruesome tale was repeated at numerous other places. The Punjab was treated more or less as an enemy country newly conquered. Its people were taught not to dare challenge or criticise the Government on pain of condign punishment.¹

The English officials, civil and military, appeared on the stage in their true colour, with the thin veneer of civilisation suddenly scrubbed out. They were gripped by fear, scared by shadows, and behaved like animals at bay, ferocious and blood-thirsty. O'Dwyer, the wilful and overbearing mentor, gave up the pretension of the moral basis of British rule and confessed his belief in the naked rule of the sword. His myrmidons excelled one another in relating their misdeeds before the Commission of Enquiry and showed no sense of shame or remorse.

"The Punjab was isolated, cut off from the rest of India; a thick veil seemed to cover it and hide it from the outside eyes,"² exclaimed Jawaharlal Nehru. But gradually the news percolated and India was convulsed. "Jallianwala Bagh kindled a conflagration throughout India."³ There was an outburst of condemnation from every side. Rabindranath Tagore's renunciation of the knighthood conferred upon him by the British Government was a grand gesture repudiating the rulers' claim to be dispensers of recognition and honour.

Demands were made for the recall of O'Dwyer and Chelmsford. Indemnity for the prisoners was pressed and

¹The account is based largely on

- (1) *Report of the Committee appointed by the Punjab Sub-Committee of the Indian National Congress;*
- (2) *Disorders Inquiry Committee Report or The Hunter Committee Report and Evidence*, in six volumes; and
- (3) *Jallianwala Bagh* by V. N. Datta.

²Nehru, Jawaharlal, *An Autobiography* (1952), p. 42

³Banerjea, S.N., *A Nation in the Making*, p. 302

enquiry into the Punjab happenings urged, both in England and in India.

In England, on behalf of the Home Rule Leagues and the Liberal Federation, deputations of eminent Indians were at work, giving evidence before the Joint Parliamentary Committee. Among them were Vithalbhai Patel, Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Mrs Besant, Surendranath Banerjea, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Srinivasa Sastri and others. They impressed upon the Secretary of State the urgency of an enquiry into the recent events in order to pacify public opinion.

Montagu knew that the policy of ruling India by the sword alone was impossible, because you can do anything with bayonets but sit on them. He realised that the Government—foreign or indigenous—could not rule a people for any length of time without the willing support or unquestioning acquiescence of a section of the effective classes of the people. Besides he had a personal stake in the Indian affairs. He had worn himself out to process the reforms and was naturally most anxious for their success. He made up his mind and during the Budget debate on May 22 gave a promise to hold an enquiry. He wrote to Chelmsford that "this method of Government (O'Dwyerism) always brings sooner or later its reward".¹

On July 17, he wrote to the Viceroy about Dyer. He said, "It was the savage and inappropriate folly of the order which rouses my anger. I cannot admit that any service that Dyer has rendered anywhere can atone for action of this kind, and I am very much worried that he should have escaped punishment for an order, the results of which are likely to be permanent."²

On August 6, 1919, Sinha, Under Secretary of State for India, speaking in the House of Lords, repeated Montagu's promise of May 22, and stated, "You cannot have disturbances of this kind and of this magnitude without an enquiry into the causes and into the measures taken to cope with these disturbances."³

But Montagu's misfortune was "that the 'powers that

¹Waley, S.D., *Edwin Montagu, A Memoir*, p. 209

²Ibid., p. 217

³Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords—Earl Russell's question and Lord Sinha's reply, August 6, 1919

be in India—the services—are wholly against us", so he tried to persuade the Governor General: "Don't let us make the mistake of defending O'Dwyerism, right or wrong. Nothing is so fatal to the British prestige in a developing country like India as a belief that there is no redress for mistakes, and, that whatever an official does, he will be backed, and not only that he will be backed, but his methods will be perpetuated."¹

The Government of India stiffly opposed the proposal for an enquiry. But the Secretary of State had already committed himself and the Viceroy had no alternative but to yield. The Committee was announced on October 14, 1919, with Hunter as Chairman, four Englishmen, and three Indians—Setalvad, Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Khan and Jagat Narain—as members.

The Committee examined a large number of witnesses including Dyer, the martial law officers, army officers and civil officers, and many persons involved in the disturbances. The Government of the Punjab placed at their disposal a large quantity of records, including the proceedings and orders of the martial law courts and the commissions. But the Committee was boycotted by the Congress "in view of the situation created by the refusal of the Government to accede to the request for the temporary release on adequate security of the principal Punjab leaders undergoing imprisonment", and the political leaders refused to appear before it.

The Committee's report was not unanimous—the European members who were in a majority signed one report, the three Indian members prepared a separate report. The findings of the majority report were:

- (1) that the disturbances were of the nature of a rebellion which might have developed into a revolution;
- (2) that the outbreaks were the result of the work of a definite organisation and were all connected;
- (3) that the proclamation of martial law in the circumstances was wholly justified; and that firing was necessary to put down the mob excesses;
- (4) that the Government of India was blameless;
- (5) that Dyer's action was open to criticism for firing

¹Waley, S.D., *Edwin Montagu, A Memoir*, p. 217

without warning and continuing the fire too long and excessively; that Dyer's object of producing a sufficient moral effect was a mistaken conception of duty.

The minority disagreed with the first two findings and agreed that firing was justified, but punishments like crawling, confiscation of property, flogging, salaaming, etc., were intended to terrorise and humiliate Indians.

On Dyer's conduct the Indian members commented more severely than the European. They compared his acts with the acts of frightfulness committed by the Germans in Belgium and France in 1914. They wrote, "We feel that Dyer, by adopting an inhuman and un-British method of dealing with the subjects of His Majesty the King-Emperor, has done great disservice to the interest of British rule in India."¹

The Congress had appointed its own Committee of Enquiry. The Commissioners were Motilal Nehru (who resigned on having been elected President of the Congress of 1919), Fazlul Haq (who could not attend owing to important business), M. R. Jayakar (in place of Fazlul Haq), C. R. Das, Abbas Tyabji and M. K. Gandhi. They signed their report on February 20, 1920.

The Committee squarely charged O'Dwyer, "who almost invariably appealed to passion and ignorance rather than to reason", and showed how "serious a responsibility he incurred in misleading both the people and his superiors".² They accused him of using oppressive methods in recruiting soldiers for the war, thereby creating the spirit of resistance and dissatisfaction which culminated in the disturbances of April 1919. The report went on to observe: "We feel tempted to say that he (O'Dwyer) invited violence from the people, so that he could crush them. The evidence shows that he subjected the Punjabis to the gravest provocation under which they momentarily lost self-control."³

About Chelmsford they expressed the opinion: "Whilst, therefore, we do not think His Excellency was willingly neglectful of the interests of those who were entrusted to his

¹*Disorders Inquiry Committee Report*, the minority report, p. 114

²*Report of the Commissioners appointed by the Punjab Sub-Committee of the Indian National Congress*, p. 7.

³*Ibid.*, p. 23

charge by His Majesty, we regret to say that His Excellency Lord Chelmsford proved himself incapable of holding the high office to which he was called, and we are of opinion that His Excellency should be recalled."¹

- After carefully sifting all the evidence they came to the conclusions: (1) "there was no conspiracy to overthrow the Government in the Punjab," (2) "no reasonable cause has been shown to justify the introduction of martial law." (3) • "the Jallianwala Bagh massacre was a calculated piece of inhumanity towards utterly innocent and unarmed men, including children, and unparalleled for its ferocity in the history of modern British administration."²

The Government of India considered the Hunter Committee report and came to the conclusion that Dyer's action at Jallianwala Bagh was indefensible, that he went beyond any reasonable requirement of the case and that he misconceived his duty. It was, therefore, considered unwise to allow him to continue to hold his position. He was consequently retired from office on March 23, 1920.

A debate was raised in Parliament concerning Dyer's case. Montagu defended the decision of the Government of India on the ground that Britain could not retain its hold upon India by terrorism.³ Churchill supported the Indian Government and repudiated the theory that Dyer had saved the Empire by his ruthlessness. He called the Jallianwala Bagh massacre "a monstrous event", "the greatest blot that has been placed upon it (English history) since the days gone by when we burned down Joan of Arc".⁴ Bonar Law condemned Dyer.⁵ Yet when votes were taken, as many as 129 voted in favour of Dyer, against 230 who supported the Government.⁶

In the House of Lords, the Conservatives including many retired Anglo-Indian officials, vindicated Dyer by a majority vote. The Government, however, stuck to its decision, censured Dyer and deprived him of his command.

¹Ibid., p. 157

²Ibid., p. 158 ..

³Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 8th July 1920, 5th Series, Vol. 131, col. 1715

⁴Ibid., col. 1733

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

This led to a reaction in his favour. A huge fund was raised, £26,000, which was presented to him with a sword to mark the approbation of his admirers.

In the meanwhile Gandhiji shocked by the violence in the Punjab (Amritsar, Lahore, Kasur, Gujranwala, etc.), Gujarat (Ahmedabad, Viramgam, Nadiad), and Bengal (Calcutta), complained with a lacerated heart, "I had called upon the people to launch upon civil disobedience before they had thus qualified themselves for it, and this mistake of mine seemed to me to be of a Himalayan magnitude."¹ He announced his decision to suspend passive resistance.

Unfortunately little change was visible in the attitude of the Government. The martial law regime was prolonged on the plea that the Afghans were hostile and had started an attack on the border. This led to the resignation of Sankaran Nair from the membership of the Viceroy's Executive Council.

An ordinance was made which delegated powers to the Punjab Government whereby any offence committed on or after March 30, 1919 could be transferred to the martial law tribunal. Gandhiji had already been excommunicated from the Punjab. C. F. Andrews who was deputed to visit the Punjab and report was prohibited entry. Later Eardley Norton, the lawyer sent to defend the accused, was similarly treated. Horniman, Editor of *The Bombay Chronicle*, was deported from India for his criticism of the Punjab Government. The Government of India expressed its approval of the policy of O'Dwyer and shut its eyes to the misdeeds of the officers. Even before the Commission of Enquiry had started work, an Indemnity Bill was passed to protect the officers who had been concerned in the administration and who might have been found guilty. The British Committee of the Indian National Congress remarked, "Prussianism could go no further."²

Prelude to Non-cooperation

During the days of satyagraha, the most heartening phenomenon was the fraternisation of the Hindus and the Muslims. The Hindus forgot their taboos about food and drink

¹Tendulkar, D.G., *Mahatma* (1951), Vol. I, p. 316

²Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Congress* (1946), Vol. I, p. 178

and accepted what a Muslim offered. The Muslims invited Hindu leaders to their mosques to give addresses. Swami Shraddhanand preached in the great mosque of Delhi, Jama Masjid. Gandhiji and Sarojini Naidu spoke in a mosque at Bombay. Muslims identified themselves with the Hindus in the hartals and satyagraha, and braved the onslaught of the authorities—lathi charges, bullets, imprisonment, loss of property. Satya Pal and Kitchlew were the twin leaders of Amritsar. Gandhi and Mahomed Ali jointly directed the nationalist movement.

But the Muslims had a twofold burden of calamities to bear: the Punjab wrongs and Governmental repression on the one hand and the tragedy of Turkey on the other. For their strong advocacy of the case of the Sultan of Turkey, the Caliph of the Sunni Muslims, many Indian Muslim leaders had to pay a heavy price. Mahomed Ali, Shaukat Ali, Abul Kalam Azad and Mahmudul Hasan were the most prominent among them. The tribulation of the Muslims on this account was an important factor in the political situation.

Thus in the year 1919 the cup of misery was full to the brim. The important factors of unrest were the martial law in the Punjab and its punitive consequences, the defeat of Turkey and its apprehended dismemberment, the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms and their unsatisfactory character, the economic ills following in the wake of a terrible war, the tremendous revolution in Russia with its explosive ideology.

Faced with these formidable conditions, the Indian National Congress met in December 1919 at Amritsar, the scene of the April tragedy. The Amritsar session marks a radical transition in the history of the Congress. The session was presided over by Motilal Nehru, thus far a Moderate in politics, but strong-willed and courageous. His national pride had been terribly hurt by the incidents in the Punjab and elsewhere. A number of other eminent Moderate leaders also attended. Among them were Srinivasa Sastri, Madan Mohan Malaviya, B. N. Sarma and Mrs Annie Besant. Many nationalist leaders were at the Congress—Tilak, the Ali brothers, Swami Shraddhanand and C. R. Das. Gandhiji was the central figure. He was the most active member of the Congress Enquiry Committee apart from being the author and inspirer of satyagraha. He had only a few weeks earlier presided over the All-India Khilafat Conference—a proof of the confidence which he enjoyed among the Muslims, and had

advised the Conference to withhold all co-operation from the Government in case the peace with Turkey was unsatisfactory. But at Amritsar Gandhiji played a moderating role.

Among the matters discussed, the important ones were: (1) the problem of Bengal, (2) the Government of India Act, 1919, and (3) the reorganisation of the Congress. As the reports of the Enquiry Committee were not yet published, little could be said about the Punjab affairs. But the demand was made for the recall of Chelmsford and replacement of O'Dwyer. At Gandhiji's insistence a resolution was passed condemning the violence indulged in by the people of the Punjab and Gujarat.

The Khilafat Question

The transformation of the Congress was precipitated by the Khilafat movement. The Indian Muslims were in a state of ferment since the outbreak of the war. There was a great conflict in their minds, for the war had created a serious religious dilemma for them. As subjects of Britain they owed loyalty to the Government which had allowed them freedom of belief and worship; but in deference to their tradition they were bound to obey the Caliph who was the religious head of the Muslim community.

In 1918, the allies were riding on the wave of victory. Germany surrendered on November 11 and Turkey had capitulated ten days earlier on October 31. The Ottoman Empire lay shattered. The Arabs, incited by the British, revolted against their sovereign and Caliph. The Greeks, encouraged by Lloyd George, claimed the coastal strip including Smyrna.

In December 1918 both the Muslim League and the Congress had met in Delhi. The Chairman of the Reception Committee of the League was Dr Ansari. He denounced Sharif Husain of Mecca who had raised the standard of rebellion against his acknowledged sovereign. He demanded the maintenance of the integrity and independence of the Muslim states, and the restoration of *Jazirat-ul-Arab* (the Arab region) containing the holy places of Islam to the Caliph. Hakim Ajmal Khan in his address as Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Congress echoed the sentiments of Dr Ansari and expressed the gratitude of the Muslims to Gandhiji for his support to the Muslim demands.

During the period of the Punjab disturbances Abdul

Bari of Ferangi Mahal, Lucknow, secured the support of a large number of *Ulama* to the Khilafat movement and the All-India Khilafat Conference was brought into existence.

At Amritsar in December 1919, Gandhiji and other Congress leaders discussed with the Khilafat leaders the plan of work for the removal of Muslim grievances. In the Khilafat Conference held at Calcutta on February 20, 1920, under the presidentship of Abul Kalam Azad, a resolution was passed on the non-cooperation movement and it was decided to send a deputation to London to present the Khilafat case before the British Government. On March 10, Gandhiji issued a manifesto in which he advocated the launching of a non-violent movement of non-cooperation. On March 19 a mourning day was observed.

On May 15, 1920, the terms of the Turkish Peace Treaty negotiated at Sevres were announced. Their harshness was excruciating to the Muslims. On August 10, 1920, the objections raised by Turkey were dismissed and its delegation forced to sign the treaty. The Central Khilafat Committee met at Bombay and on May 28 reiterated the Muslim claims and announced the decision to resort to non-violent non-cooperation.

In order to allay Hindu apprehensions a statement was issued which contained the assurance that "the Musalmans of India will fight to the last man in resisting any Musalman power that may have designs upon India".¹

Azad gave his opinion based upon *Shariat* (Muslim Law) in these words: "If India becomes independent and is ruled by a Government which gives the same liberty to the Musalmans as to other communities, in that case it is the injunction of Islam that the Muslims should protect their country from invaders irrespective of whether the invaders are Muslims or even the army of the Caliph himself."²

Gandhiji was convinced of the justice of the Muslim cause. He stated: •

"I am bound as an Indian to share the sufferings and trials of fellow-Indians. If I deem the Mohammedan to

¹Bamford, P.C., *Histories of the Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements*, p. 156

²Syed Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *Musalmanon ka Roshan Mustaqbil* (Urdu). p. 512

be my brother, it is my duty to help him in this hour of trial to the best of my ability, if his cause commands itself to me as just."¹

On June 9, the Khilafat Committee met at Allahabad and enunciated four stages of non-cooperation, viz.,

- (1) giving up of titles and honorary posts;
- (2) resignation of posts in the civil services of Government (the Police being excluded);
- (3) resignation of services in the Police and Army;
- (4) refusal to pay taxes.

In July 1920, a Khilafat conference was held in Sind and was attended by Gandhiji. He called upon the twenty-three crore Hindus to help seven crore Muslims and to desist from helping the Government.

A stage had arrived when it was necessary that a final decision must be taken. Gandhiji in an article entitled, "Mr. Montagu on the Khilafat Agitation", wrote :

"To my amazement and dismay I have discovered that the present representatives of the Empire have become dishonest and unscrupulous. They have no real regard for the wishes of the people of India and they count the honour of India as of little consequence. I can no longer retain affection for a Government so evilly manned as it is nowadays."²

On July 28 Gandhiji announced that non-cooperation would be inaugurated on August 1 with fasting and prayer, and suspension of business. Tilak promised his support to the non-cooperation programme. Unfortunately he passed away at midnight preceding the dawn of August 1. His bier was lifted by Gandhiji, Shaukat Ali and Dr Kitchlew. "My strongest bulwark is gone," mourned Gandhiji.

The non-cooperation campaign started with a bang on August 1. Gandhiji wrote on that date to the Viceroy, "The Imperial Government have acted in the Khilafat matter in an unscrupulous, immoral and unjust manner. . . I can retain neither respect nor affection for such a Government." And

¹Young India, June 2, 1920

²Tendulkar, D. G., *Mahatma*, Vol. I, p. 365

along with the letter he returned all the medals which the Government had bestowed on him as marks of appreciation for his services.

The next step was to obtain the approval and ratification of the Congress for non-cooperation. A special session of the organisation was, therefore, summoned in Calcutta on September 4. Meanwhile Gandhiji, Shaukat Ali, Mahomed Ali and other leaders toured extensively through India, rousing people's enthusiasm and laying stress upon Hindu-Muslim unity.

The Congress met under the chairmanship of Lala Lajpat Rai. About 3,000 delegates attended and among them a large number were Muslims.

Gandhiji moved the following fateful resolution which in its preamble narrated the history of the Khilafat question and the failure of all efforts to secure a satisfactory solution:

"This Congress is further of opinion that there is no course left open for the people of India but to approve of and adopt the policy of progressive non-violent non-cooperation until the said wrongs are righted and swaraj is established."¹

The resolution described the seven items of the programme of non-cooperation. The speech of Gandhiji was a most earnest plea for action. He asked, "If the Congress cannot wring justice from unwilling hands, how can it vindicate its existence and its honour?" He promised that if there was sufficient response to the plan, "you can gain swaraj in the course of a year".²

After a prolonged discussion the resolution was passed on September 9 by a large majority. About 1,500 delegates attended the Nagpur session of the Congress in December and confirmed the non-cooperation resolution unanimously. Even those who had opposed it at Calcutta supported it at Nagpur, with the exception of Jinnah.

The Congress resolution was strongly supported by a fatwa (religious decree) issued by the *Jamiatul-Ulama-e-Hind* calling upon the Muslims to boycott elections, Government schools and colleges and law courts, and to renounce titles

¹Tendulkar, D. G., *Mahatma* (1951), Vol. II, p. 12

²Ibid.. p. 15

and ranks conferred by the Government. The decree was signed by nearly 900 *Ulama*.

At Nagpur the new constitution of the Congress was adopted, thereby converting it into a working dynamic organisation for carrying on the struggle for independence.

The declaration of non-cooperation with the Government was in fact a revolutionary step tantamount to the proclamation of war, with this difference that the war was non-violent. This was a unique kind of war. It inflicted neither pain nor injury upon the opponent, reserving all suffering for the non-cooperator. This war demanded greater discipline, greater bravery, greater endurance, greater sacrifices, greater patience than the bloody war of weapons. It admitted of no evil passion—anger or hatred—even against the enemy. It required burning faith in the righteousness of the cause and unflinching resolve in its pursuit, whatever befell it, good or ill. These requirements made its pursuit much more difficult than the waging of a war of violence, and much more exacting too.

Gandhiji made the point clear: "Complete civil disobedience is a state of peaceful rebellion—a refusal to obey every single state-made law. It is certainly more dangerous than an armed rebellion. For it can never be put down if the civil resisters are prepared to face extreme hardships. It is based upon an implicit belief in the absolute efficacy of innocent suffering."¹

The Congress and the Khilafat Committee had agreed upon the dual purpose of non-cooperation—redress of the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs and establishment of swaraj. Gandhiji felt it necessary to explain the grounds on which he joined the Khilafat movement. Essentially his reasons were humanitarian and moral. They were not political in the narrow sense, although undoubtedly aimed at securing permanent national interests.

The Khilafat case was based on the fact that the Sultan of Turkey was the recognised Caliph, i.e., religious head, of the Muslims and had to perform certain duties towards the holy places of Islam situated in the *Jazirat-ul-Arab* which were imposed upon him by virtue of his position. It was necessary that the holy places should be under his supervision and control. Therefore, the Khilafatists demanded the

¹Ibid., p. 71

maintenance of the religious prestige and temporal power of the Caliph, the Sultan of Turkey, which involved the unrestricted performance of the Caliph's duties in the preservation of the holy places, defined by the Muslim jurists as including Palestine, Mesopotamia and Arabia.

This did not, however, mean that direct Turkish rule should be imposed upon the Arabs in opposition to the wishes of their inhabitants. What was intended was to give complete self-government to them under the Caliph's control over the holy places.

The case of the Muslims was based on the pledges which the British Prime Ministers, Asquith and Lloyd George, and the British Viceroy, Hardinge, had given about the holy places, the integrity of Turkish dominion and independence of Muslim territories; but contrary to their pledges, they had ruthlessly brushed them aside during the war.

The importance of the pledges was that the Indian Muslim troops had fought against the Turkish Muslim army in the various theatres of war in the belief that they would be implemented. But the British forces operating in the Middle East had not spared the holy places. Above all, the Treaty of Sevres threatened to break Turkey into shreds, the Greeks were incited to grab even the homelands of the Turks; the Arab provinces of Turkey—Syria and Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq—were placed under French and British mandates, Palestine was assigned to the Jews as their national home, and Egypt was wrenched from the Turkish Empire and made a British protectorate.

There could not be a more flagrant case of breach of faith. It was the call of human sympathy as well as of moral conscience that India should support the Muslim demands. According to Gandhiji, it would be a poor conception of patriotism if one section of the nation failed to come to the aid of the other in the hour of its need. And in the case of the Khilafat, it became an imperative duty because of the justice of the cause.

Even British statesmen like Montagu and Reading recognised the weight of Mohammedan objections to the Treaty of Sevres. Reading wrote to Lloyd George before he left for India to assume the Viceroyalty: "I do not want to add to them (your difficulties), and I am writing only for the purpose of telling you how important it is, in my judgment,

to make concessions to Mohammedan opinion if you think they can safely be made."¹

Gandhiji said :

"It is just my sense of moral responsibility which has made me take up the Khilafat question and to identify myself entirely with the Muhammadans. It is perfectly true that I am assisting and countenancing the union between Hindus and Moslems."²

After all, during the agitation and the satyagraha campaign against the Rowlett Acts, the Muslims had thrown themselves into the fire with an ardour of which any patriot could be justly proud. But nationalism is a delicate plant and it has to be nourished and fostered carefully and ceaselessly. Its basis is mutual confidence and brotherly affection and these wax and wane as the bonds of sentiment grow or fade.

Gandhiji, then, stood on firm ground so far as the moral and humanitarian aspects of the Turkish question were concerned, but it is doubtful if the political and practical implications were clearly recognised either by the leaders of the Khilafat movement or by Gandhiji.

In the non-cooperation movement of Gandhiji, nationalism and politics and religion and mysticism and fanaticism "formed a strange mixture". But as Jawaharlal pointed out, "A demoralised, backward, and broken-up people suddenly straightened their backs and lifted their heads and took part in disciplined, joint action on a countrywide scale. This action itself, we felt, would give irresistible power to the masses. We ignored the necessity of thought behind the action; we forgot that without a conscious ideology and objective the energy and enthusiasm of the masses must end largely in smoke."³

Worse still, the Congress and the Khilafat Committee paid little attention to the practical aspects of their objective, showed no awareness of the currents of political thought which were not new but had begun flowing strongly in Turkey during the war.

For this remissness, Indians had to pay a heavy price.

¹Montgomery Hyde, H., *Lord Reading*, pp. 331-33

²Young India (1919-22), edited by Mahatma Gandhi, p. 152

³Nehru, Jawaharlal, *An Autobiography*, p. 76

In any case, the challenge to the might of an empire which had just emerged victorious from a war against a determined and powerful enemy was an act of magnificent courage. Gandhiji and a large band of devoted workers swept through the country, its many towns and numerous villages, carrying aloft the banner inscribed with the message of non-cooperation.

Non-cooperation

The campaign had two aspects: constructive and destructive. In the pursuance of the former, it was decided to raise a fund of one crore of rupees in the name of Tilak to finance the non-cooperation activities; to enrol a volunteer corps of one crore members to help in the promotion of the various boycotts, social, educational, legal and economic, and to distribute twenty lakh spinning-wheels to provide work for the unemployed or underemployed and to replace foreign cloth by handmade Indian cloth.

In regard to the latter, the important items were: (1) the boycott of the law courts by the lawyers who would set up popular tribunals for administering justice; (2) the boycott of schools and colleges owned or aided or recognised by the Government and the establishment of national educational institutions; (3) the boycott of elections to the assembly and the provincial councils; (4) the surrender of honours, titles, etc., and the boycott of official functions; (5) the boycott of British goods and the encouragement of swadeshi, especially khaddar or home-spun, home-woven cloth; and (6) the prohibition of drinking liquor.

The country was profoundly stirred and an unprecedented wave of enthusiasm ran through India's teeming millions. Unparalleled scenes of fervour, devotion and sacrifice were witnessed everywhere. Lawyers of the distinction of Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das, Rajendra Prasad, Rajagopalachari surrendered their highly profitable practice; thousands of students came out of colleges and schools, and many national institutions were founded where teachers worked on a pittance. A number of pupils of the Aligarh University left their studies at the bidding of Mahomed Ali and founded the Jamia Millia Islamia which later shifted to Delhi. Subhas Chandra Bose resigned his post in the Indian Civil Service and worked as Principal of the National College at Calcutta. Jawaharlal Nehru bade adieu to the Allahabad High Court

and was drawn into the whirlpool of non-cooperation. He gave expression to feelings which moved the non-cooperators in these words :

"Many of us who worked for the Congress programme lived in a kind of intoxication during the year 1921. We were full of excitement and optimism and a buoyant enthusiasm. We sensed the happiness of a person crusading for a cause. . . . Above all, we had a sense of freedom and a pride in that freedom. The old feeling of oppression and frustration was completely gone."¹

Gandhiji had cleared the way of self-recovery through this vital upheaval from within. He generated the explosive force needed for such an upheaval within the soul of India, which "could not come through loans and gifts and grants and concessions and proclamations from without".²

From August 1, 1920 when it started to February 6, 1922 when it was suspended, the non-cooperation campaign moved in crescendo. The Tilak Fund was oversubscribed as a result of Umar Subhani's self-sacrificing efforts; lakhs of spinning-wheels were distributed and began plying; the recruitment of volunteers reached half the target. Of the triple boycott, the response in regard to honours was meagre which was not surprising; the educational boycott was quite effective in the beginning. The number of students in colleges was reduced from 52,482 in 1919-20 to 45,933 in 1921-22, and in secondary schools from 1,281,810 in 1919-20 to 1,239,524 in 1921-22.³ But to provide for the education of the large numbers involved was a difficult job and although many colleges and schools were established, many could not be accommodated and had to go back to their institutions. Similar was the case with the legal profession, but because of lack of alternative employment for persons who had to maintain families, it was not possible for a large number to give up their only means of livelihood. But in cases against the non-cooperators, the accused refused to participate and put up no defence in the trial courts. So far as the boycott of elections was concerned, the politicians of the moderate liberal school and sundry others had made up their minds to stand for the coun-

¹Ibid., p. 69

²Ibid., p. 66 (quotation from C.F. Andrews, *Independence—the Immediate Need*)

³Bamford, P.C., *Histories of the Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements*, p. 103

cils. The Congress abstained from voting but demonstrated quite convincingly its hold upon the electorate, and exposed the unrepresentative character of those elected.

The effect of the boycott of foreign cloth was felt throughout India. It attained considerable success in Bengal, Bombay, Madras and the United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh). The review of the Trade of India in 1921-22 published by the Commercial Intelligence Department stated: "Another factor which seriously affected piece-goods importations during the year under review was the vigorous revival. . . of the campaign in favour of Indian-made piece-goods, reinforced by a further development in favour of the wearing of home-woven goods made from Indian hand-spun yarn."

Regarding the boycott of liquor during the year 1921-22, the excise reports of most provinces showed that it had considerable effect in reducing excise revenue. In the Punjab, Bihar and Orissa and Bombay, the reduction was respectively 33, 10 and 6 lakhs of rupees.

It is not possible to narrate all the incidents of this amazing campaign of twenty months in which the Hindus and Muslims worked shoulder to shoulder for the dual cause of Khilafat and swaraj. But some are noteworthy. In June 1920 Abdul Bari of Lucknow gave a fatwa signed by many divines declaring India to be *Dar-al-Harb*, which presented to the Muslims with the alternative of *jehad* (holy war) or *hijrat* (emigration). This was reiterated in November 1920, as *mutaffiqat fatwa* (joint decree). It is estimated that nearly 18,000 Muslims mostly from Sind and the North-West Frontier Provinces left for Afghanistan. The Afghan authorities refused to admit them, and they had to return homeless and miserable.

By July 1921, the non-cooperation movement had thoroughly roused the country, but had made little impression upon the British rulers and the settlement of the Khilafat question was as far as ever. The result was that frustration and bitterness rose high. The All-India Khilafat Conference which met at Karachi on July 8, therefore, called upon the Muslim soldiers of the Indian army to abandon service as it was religiously unlawful. For this Mahomed Ali was arrested on September 14 and prosecuted. Gandhiji then issued a manifesto, saying, "It is contrary to national interest for any Indian to serve as a civilian, and more especially as a soldier,

under Government."¹

The Congress Working Committee met on October 5 and endorsed the resolution of the Khilafat Conference and asked the people to repeat the speech of Mahomed Ali at public meetings. At this meeting the Provincial Congress Committees were authorised to launch civil disobedience movements.

In November 1921, the Prince of Wales arrived in India. The All India Congress Committee had decided to boycott the visit. Hartals, demonstrations and political meetings, greeted him in the places he visited. Unfortunately in Bombay, the mob went out of control and there were riotous scenes of mob violence and police reprisals in several places.

In Calcutta under the leadership of C. R. Das, civil disobedience was started. As the Congress volunteer organisation was declared illegal, he issued an appeal for the enlistment of volunteers. His son and wife offered themselves as volunteers and were arrested immediately. As a consequence, the number of volunteers swelled to thousands and intense excitement prevailed in the city. On December 10, Das himself was apprehended. His stirring message to Bengal before his arrest was :

"I feel the handcuffs on my wrists and the weight of iron chains on my body. It is the agony of bondage. The whole of India is a vast prison. The work of the Congress must be carried on. What matters it whether I am taken or left? What matters it whether I am dead or alive?"²

The Moplah Rising

One of the most unfortunate incidents of the movements was the rising of the Moplahs in Kerala. The Moplahs were the descendants of the Arabs who had settled in this region over a thousand years ago. Most of them were poor and ignorant and were occupied in agriculture or petty trade. They were very backward and greatly under the influence of their Qazis and Maulavis known as Thangals. From February 1921, the non-cooperation propaganda began to spread in Kerala. On February 16 four leaders—two Hindus and two Muslims—were arrested. Excitement began to grow, con-

¹Tendulkar, D. G., *Mahatma*, Vol. II, p. 82

²Nehru, Jawaharlal, *An Autobiography*, p. 79

ferences were held, and more persons were imprisoned. The Khilafatist meetings, where the wrongs of Islam were described, exacerbated religious feelings. The authorities attempted to suppress the movement which seemed to threaten law and order. The Moplahs then rebelled and started a guerrilla war with swords and spears against guns and rifles. The inflamed Moplahs committed terrible atrocities against the administration as well as their Hindu neighbours. For some time the administration was paralysed. The Government called in troops to suppress the rising and measures of extreme severity were taken against the rebels. In the middle of October, martial law was imposed and by the end of the year peace was restored.

A great controversy had raged about the causes of the rising. Even officials of Government took opposite views regarding the inciting causes. Innes, Acting Collector of Malabar, on the one hand, held that the economic conditions were responsible for the troubles which disturbed Malabar from time to time. On the other hand, Evans, his superior, contorted this thesis and held that the Moplah discontent could not be traced to economic factors like the land tenure system, but was the result of political incitement.

The Madras Government, while agreeing with Evans, admitted, "It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that to some extent at least the phenomena which appeared in the North during the last century—the growth of population, the rise in prices, the substitution of competition for custom, the consequent friction between landlords and tenants and its sequels, litigations, evictions, exactions must have manifested themselves in Malabar."¹

In the existing economic conditions, there was ample predisposition to disturbance. The feelings stirred by the India-wide agitation for Khilafat and swaraj proved an aggravating factor, and then the police excesses—the prohibition of entry into Malabar in case of persons like Rajagopalachari and Yaqub Hasan, the arrests on a large scale of leaders, and the attempt to suppress the non-violent non-cooperation movement—proved the last straw. The religious passions were excited and fanaticism eventuated in unspeakable horrors.

The measures for the suppression of the rising were as

¹Home Department, Political, 1922, No. 23 & KW. See note by Sec. S.P.O. Donnell of 8 May 1922.

savage as the barbarous deeds of the Moplahs. Troops from Nepal, Garhwal and Burma were concentrated upon the land. Gurkhas, Garhwalis, Kachins were utter strangers to the people and therefore wholly devoid of any sympathy towards the rebels. The atrocities committed by the Moplahs were answered by ruthless punishment under martial law. The worst incident of this revolting affair was the packing of nearly 150 Moplahs in iron wagons of a goods train which slowly travelled under the scorching rays of the mid-summer sun from Calicut to Madras, and when the wagon was opened at a wayside station it was found that the large majority had died of suffocation and the living were in a precarious condition.

The immediate effects of the Moplah outrages were deplorable. The fires of communalism were stoked. The Muslim communalists either denied the atrocities or minimised them and tried to shift the blame. Moreover, the Moplahs were praised for their religious zeal and bravery. The Hindu communalists were horrified. The exaggerated tales which reached the North inflamed feelings. The cry of Hinduism in danger was raised and movements of *shuddhi* (reconversion) and *sangathan* (organisation) planned. A vicious circle of accusation and counter-accusation was set into motion which created the heat in which the tender plant of Hindu-Muslim unity began to wither.

But in spite of the grave shock, the non-cooperation movement showed no signs of relaxation, as the boycott of the Prince of Wales demonstrated. In fact, the enrolment of volunteers was accelerated, with the result that Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Lajpat Rai and many others were sent to jail.

As the situation was deteriorating, Malaviya intervened to bring about a settlement. The intermediaries met in Calcutta in December 1921 and it was decided to call a Round Table Conference to find a solution. Gandhiji's demand was the release of all the prisoners including those who had been jailed for issuing the *fatwa* or preaching boycott of military service as a precondition of the conference. But the Viceroy refused to agree to a general amnesty. The proposal fell through.

In the Christmas of 1921 the Congress met at Ahmedabad and in the absence of C. R. Das who had been gaoled, Ajmal Khan presided. An appeal was made to young men over 18 years of age to join the volunteer corps. It was decided that

both individual and mass civil disobedience might be launched, and Gandhiji was appointed as the sole dictator to decide on the time, the manner and the object of civil disobedience. At this session the *Ulama* played an active part.

The situation was worsening every day and a crisis seemed imminent. Malaviya and others called an All-Parties Conference in the middle of January 1922 which was attended by Gandhiji; Jinnah, Jayakar and Natarajan acted as Secretaries. At the behest of the conference the Congress Working Committee postponed the inauguration of civil disobedience. But the Viceroy was still adamant on the question of the release of prisoners, and the proposal was rejected. It was obvious that by insisting upon keeping certain classes of prisoners behind the bars, the Government hoped to create a division between the Congress and the Khilafat Conference. The Congress leaders were not prepared to fall into the trap.

Negotiations with the Government broke down. The senior Governors were opposed to a policy of appeasement and the British Cabinet disapproved it.¹ Reading was now ready to take the strong line. Repression was let loose at full blast. Gandhiji addressed a letter to the Viceroy in February giving notice of his intention to start civil disobedience at Bardoli in case the Government failed to settle the Khilafat question and undo the Punjab wrongs. The response of the Viceroy was negative, as he was fully prepared to suppress the movement.

Unfortunately on February 5, a tragic event occurred at Chauri Chaura, a small town in the district of Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh. A number of policemen came into conflict with a procession. Being overwhelmed, they took refuge in the *thana* (police station). The violent mob set fire to the building reducing men and all to ashes. Other violent deeds had taken place elsewhere, e.g., in Madras, at the time of the visit of the Prince of Wales.

In the face of spreading violence, what needed to be done? Gandhiji was a votary of absolute non-violence in thought, word and deed. The people, however, had not imbibed the spirit which provided the basis for his philosophy of life. The responsibility for this breach of the moral law which was dearer to him than his own life and even the freedom of the nation lay heavily upon his conscience.

¹Reading Papers, Montagu to Reading, telegram 20 December 1921; Home Political 89 of 1922, telegrams from Governors to Viceroy

It was also abundantly clear that violence on the part of the people would usher in the reign of general disorder and indiscipline, with the result that the leadership of the masses which the Congress had exercised would be wrested from its hands. The country would be taken over by anarchy and the Government would be furnished with sufficient excuse to resort to the employment of unlimited force involving large-scale destruction of life and property. The year 1857 would be repeated with unforeseeable consequences.

What Gandhiji later said about Bardoli applied to the situation created by Chauri Chaura. His words were: "Suppose the non-violent disobedience of Bardoli was permitted by God to succeed and the Government had abdicated in favour of the victors of Bardoli, who would control the unruly elements that must be expected to perpetuate inhumanity upon due provocation?"¹ He was not sure that he could.

In the circumstances he, however, decided to suspend the non-cooperation movement and to abandon the programme of civil disobedience at Bardoli. A meeting of the Congress Working Committee was held on February 12 to confirm the decision.

The decision was tantamount to an acknowledgement of defeat. But the defeat was not palatable to a number of prominent leaders of the Congress, especially because their faith in non-violence was not as thorough-going and immutable as that of Gandhiji. Das and Motilal Nehru differed from the decision and wrote angry letters questioning the propriety of the resolution of the Working Committee. Jawaharlal Nehru was equally puzzled and distressed. The question was: Why did Gandhiji not realise the far-reaching consequences of his admission? For, if the success of civil disobedience was apprehended to unleash uncontrollable forces of evil, there remained no justification for the movement, unless chaos was regarded as preferable to order enforced by foreign rule.

The sudden stoppage of the movement which had raised enthusiasm to a very high pitch was bound to create confusion. The result was that Congress leaders became divided into two groups—(1) those in favour of continuing the non-cooperation and the boycott programme, (2) those who desired

¹Fischer, Louis, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 219

to abandon the boycott of the councils in order to use them for the national purpose, viz., swaraj.

The Khilafatists were also divided into groups. A large number lost all faith in non-cooperation and Gandhiji's leadership and began to look for Government help; the rest continued to believe in Gandhian methods which alone could lead India to its goal.

Taking advantage of this division among the nationalist forces, the Government which had hesitated to move against Gandhiji so far took a quick decision and arrested him on March 10. His trial began a week later on the 18th. Gandhiji offered no defence. On the contrary, he pleaded guilty to the charge of promoting disaffection towards the Government and asked for the severest punishment. He made, however, a statement, frank and dignified, to explain why he, who was loyal to the Empire heretofore, became disaffected towards it. The statement was a severe indictment of British rule and a reasoned justification of the non-violent non-cooperation movement.

Addressing the court, Gandhiji said :

"To preach disaffection towards the existing system of Government has become almost a passion with me, and the advocate-general is entirely in the right when he says that my preaching of disaffection did not commence with my connection with *Young India* but that it commenced much earlier. . . . I knew that I was playing with fire. I ran the risk and if I was set free I would still do the same. I have felt it this morning that I would have failed in my duty, if I did not say what I said here just now.

"I wanted to avoid violence. Non-violence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed. But I had to make my choice. I had either to submit to a system which I considered had done an irreparable harm to my country, or incur the risk of the mad fury of my people bursting forth when they understood the truth from my lips.

"I owe it perhaps* to the Indian public and to the public in England, to placate which this prosecution is mainly taken up, that I should explain why from a staunch loyalist and co-operator, I have become an un-

compromising disaffectionist and non-cooperator. To the court too I should say why I plead guilty to the charge of promoting disaffection towards the Government established by law in India.

"The first shock came in the shape of the Rowlatt Act—a law designed to rob the people of all real freedom. I felt called upon to lead an intensive agitation against it. Then followed the Punjab horrors beginning with the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and culminating in crawling orders, public floggings and other indescribable humiliations. I discovered too that the plighted word of the Prime Minister to the Musalmans of India regarding the integrity of Turkey and the holy places of Islam was not likely to be fulfilled. But in spite of the forebodings and the grave warnings of friends at the Amritsar Congress in 1919, I fought for co-operation and working the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, hoping that the Prime Minister would redeem his promise to the Indian Musalmans, that the Punjab wound would be healed, and that the reforms, inadequate and unsatisfactory though they were, marked a new era of hope in the life of India.

"But all that hope was shattered. The Khilafat promise was not to be redeemed. The Punjab crime was whitewashed and most culprits went not only unpunished but remained in service, and some continued to draw pensions from the Indian revenue and in some cases were even rewarded. I saw too that not only did the reforms not mark a change of heart, but they were only a method of further draining India of her wealth and of prolonging her servitude.

"I came reluctantly to the conclusion that the British connection had made India more helpless than she ever was before, politically and economically. A disarmed India has no power of resistance against any aggressor if she wanted to engage in an armed conflict with him. So much is this the case that some of our best men consider that India must take generations before she can achieve dominion status.

"The law itself in this country has been used to serve the foreign exploiter. My unbiased examination of the Punjab Martial Law cases has led me to believe that at

least ninety-five per cent of convictions were wholly bad. My experience of political cases in India leads me to the conclusion that in nine out of every ten, the condemned men were totally innocent. Their crime consisted in the love of their country. In ninety-nine cases out of hundred, justice has been denied to Indians as against Europeans in the courts of India. This is not an exaggerated picture. It is the experience of almost every Indian who has had anything to do with such cases. In my opinion, the administration of the law is thus prostituted, consciously or unconsciously, for the benefit of the exploiter.

"The greater misfortune is that the Englishmen and their Indian associates in the administration of the country do not know that they are engaged in the crime I have attempted to describe. I am satisfied that many Englishmen and Indian officials honestly believe that they are administering one of the best systems devised in the world, and that India is making steady, though slow, progress. They do not know that a subtle but effective system of terrorism and an organized display of force on the one hand, and the deprivation of all powers of retaliation or self-defence on the other, have emasculated the people and induced in them the habit of simulation. This awful habit has added to the ignorance and the self-deception of the administrators. Section 124-A, under which I am happily charged, is perhaps the prince among political sections of the Indian Penal Code designed to suppress the liberty of the citizen. Affection cannot be manufactured or regulated by law. If one has no affection for a person or system, one should be free to give the fullest expression to one's disaffection, so long as one does not contemplate, promote, or incite to violence. But the section under which Mr. Banker and I are charged is one under which mere promotion of disaffection is a crime. I have studied some of the cases tried under it; I know that some of the most loved of India's patriots have been convicted under it. I consider it a privilege, therefore, to be charged under that section. . . . I hold it to be a virtue to be disaffected towards a Government which in its totality has done more harm to India than any previous system. India is less manly under the British rule than she ever was before. Holding such a belief, I consider it to be a sin to have affection for the system. And it has been a precious privilege for me to be able to write

what I have in the various articles tendered in evidence against me.

"In fact, I believe that I have rendered a service to India and England by showing in non-co-operation the way out of the unnatural state in which both are living. In my humble opinion, non-co-operation with evil is as much a duty as is co-operation with good. But in the past, non-co-operation has been deliberately expressed in violence to the evil-doer. I am endeavouring to show to my countrymen that violent non-co-operation only multiplies evil, and that as evil can only be sustained by violence, withdrawal of support of evil requires complete abstention from violence. Non-violence implies voluntary submission to the penalty for non-co-operation with evil. I am here, therefore, to invite and submit cheerfully to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is deliberate crime, and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen."¹

The judge convicted him and sentenced him to six years' imprisonment. He was confined in Yeravda Central Prison in Poona.

Results of Non-Cooperation

The first unarmed revolt not only in the history of India but in all history ended actually in March 1922, but it lingered on till 1924. It certainly failed to achieve its two proclaimed objects—the restitution of the Turkish Caliphate and the attainment of swaraj. Its third object, the rectification of the Punjab wrongs, was a minor issue. From August 1, 1920 to March 1922, it was sustained by the enthusiasm, devotion and self-sacrificing spirit of the people, who, lacking in organisation, experience and discipline, were pitted against a powerful Government with almost unlimited material resources—army, police, administrative machinery, funds. It was a fight between what Gandhiji called "soul force" and "material force", or two wills—the will to freedom and the will to dominate.

Its failure to achieve swaraj was temporary. The struggle had just begun. It had only received a check. It had not ended. But the struggle had not been fought in vain. The gains in the words of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Report

¹Tendulkar, D.G., *Mahatma*, Vol. II, pp. 129-33

were: (1) the general awakening of the masses to their political rights and privileges, (2) the total loss of faith in the present system of Government, (3) the belief that it was only through their own efforts that India could hope to be free, (4) the faith in the Congress as the only organisation which could properly direct national effort to gain freedom, and (5) the utter failure of repression to cow down the people.

Willingdon, the Governor of Madras, writing to the Home Member of the Government of India, said, "The non-co-operation movement, whatever may be its other achievements, has spread political ideas among the masses of the people and their placid content has been disturbed."¹

The gain was thus twofold—moral and political : (1) strengthening of the traits of character essential for a free society, (2) removal of the illusion that the freedom-loving and democratic people of England intended to educate the backward Indian people in the ways of self-government, though necessarily the process had to be slow and gradual.

The psychological effects of the movement on the Indian mind were remarkable. But it also set a reaction in the minds of the British which was no less notable. It shook their self-confidence, the belief in the righteousness of their imperial mission. Doubts began to assail them which compelled reflection upon the justification of British rule. Scepticism about the results of their policies—educational, cultural, economic and political—disturbed their self-complacency and equanimity. The educated class, the political leaders, Gandhiji became objects of distrust, the lowest motives were ascribed to their actions. The future appeared dark, the consciousness that they were not wanted in India distracted the minds of the rulers.

Old members of the Civil Service began resolving not to send their sons into what was once regarded as the "heaven-born service". The steel frame did not after all seem capable of sustaining for long the loosening structure of the Raj.

Edward Thompson recognised, "What the world takes for just weakness in our Government and imbecility in our film magnates and authors and book society is merely senility. We have fallen into a drowse, the drowse of old age."²

¹Willingdon to Vincent, July 1, 1922. Home Deptt. Political 1922, No. 418 & KW.

²Thompson, E.J., *An End of the Hour*, p. 25 (Greenberger, A.J., *The British Image of India*, p. 86)

The will to hold on was weakened.

The movement led by Gandhiji was not narrowly political in its objective. Gandhiji did aim at swaraj and the restitution of the Khilafat, but for him they were not ends in themselves. Swaraj was a necessary instrument for the attainment of the ideal. Khilafat was the outer symbol of an inner conviction. What then was the ideal? The ideal was an ordering of human affairs on the basis of truth and non-violence. Truth and non-violence were two facets of the same reality which was spiritual in essence. The spiritual was the opposite of the irrational, in which violence inhered. Non-violence implied love and love contradicts all inequalities based on race, creed, caste, wealth, sex. A society founded on truth and non-violence can, therefore, exist only where all exploitation of man by man ceases, where labour is a universal duty, where wants are limited, and men live in small communities bound together by ties of mutual respect and affection. Gandhiji's ideal was a far-off vision. But he walked through life with his eyes fixed upon it and his feet strode the path which led towards it.

In Retrospect

SHANKERLAL BANKER

A CONFERENCE of Hindus and Muslims was held on November 24, 1919 to consider the Khilafat question prior to the Amritsar session of the Congress. Gandhiji attended it by special invitation. The conference discussed what steps could be taken if the Government did not do justice on this question.

A resolution came up in the conference on the adoption of swadeshi and boycott of foreign cloth. Opposing this, Maulana Hasrat Mohani brought up the question of boycott of British goods. Gandhiji explained to the audience that boycott of British goods was not possible and it would engender a sense of revenge too. And he explained to the conference the resolution on the boycott of foreign cloth and, in accordance with his suggestion, a resolution to that effect was passed by the conference. But this did not satisfy Hasrat Mohani. Expressing his dissatisfaction, he said that they must talk about something that would directly affect the Government.

As Gandhiji was listening to the Maulana's speech, the idea of non-cooperation suddenly occurred to him. He held that to consider how to affect the Government while co-operating with it was useless and if they wished to offer such opposition, that would be possible only by withdrawing co-operation from the Government. Hence after the Maulana concluded his speech, in reply to it Gandhiji presented this idea and said, "The Musalman brethren have taken one more important decision. God forbid it, but if possibly the peace terms go against them, they may stop co-operation with the Government. I believe this is the right of subjects." This fact about the birth of the idea of non-cooperation is important and deserves mention.

I went to Lahore towards the end of the year 1920 in

order to meet Gandhiji and requested him to accept the presidentship of the Home Rule League and join it. This time Gandhiji agreed to join the League. He was elected its President and the organisation too was re-named Swarajya Sabha.

Prior to the Calcutta Congress, Gandhiji had placed the programme of non-cooperation before the nation and the Swarajya Sabha had taken this work in hand in Bombay. Delegates in large numbers from Bombay had gone to the Calcutta Congress and were helpful in getting the non-cooperation resolution passed by a majority. The Swarajya Sabha had played its part also in it. But after the Calcutta resolution on non-cooperation, Jinnah and some people with different ideas dissociated themselves from it. After its Nagpur session, the Congress itself adopted fully Gandhiji's programme of non-violent non-cooperation and work began to be done under it on behalf of the Congress itself under the leadership of Gandhiji. Hence later on there was no special programme to be launched on behalf of the Swarajya Sabha.

As a result of the activities of the Home Rule League and the Satyagraha Sabha, the people of Bombay had got ready for such kind of agitation. The reins of the Bombay Committee at that time were in the hands of Liberal leaders and they did not approve of this programme, but propaganda for it was in full swing on behalf of the Swarajya Sabha. In the meetings held in this connection, in addition to Gandhiji and the Ali brothers, Sarojini Naidu, Horniman, Vithalbhai Patel, Khadilkar and others explained clearly the ideas relating to it. As a result of this, the atmosphere had become surcharged with enthusiasm.

Gandhiji presented the non-cooperation resolution at the Calcutta Congress. Among those strongly opposing it were Extremists like Das Babu and Liberal leaders too; even then it was passed. The delegates from Bombay who had gone to Calcutta in large numbers were instrumental in getting the resolution passed.

After the special Congress session at Calcutta, the wind of non-cooperation spread in all nooks and corners of India, but the resolution of the special session had to be ratified at Nagpur. Das Babu presented the non-cooperation resolution and it was passed unanimously. The objective of the Con-

gress was set down in this session as the attainment of swaraj through non-violence and truth.

The Provincial Congress Committee in Bombay was reorganised and Mrs Sarojini Naidu became its President and Umar Subhani, Dr Sathe and I became its General Secretaries* and Laxmidas Terasi became Treasurer. The Nagpur Congress had passed a resolution of a threefold boycott. The Provincial Committee took up the work of this boycott.

The courts were to be boycotted in two ways: one, people should not take their disputes to the courts but get them resolved through panchayats and two, lawyers should give up their practice. This boycott of law courts was an important programme. The lawyers and barristers practising in the Bombay law courts did not view this non-cooperation with any special sympathy. Hence only a handful of lawyers and barristers like Jayakar, Vithalbhai and Jamnadas Mehta gave up their practice. Other people went on following their avocations. Moreover, it was not felt proper to persuade them to give them up. Leading lawyers like Vallabhbhai, Krishnalal Desai (Bachubhai), Kalidas Zaveri, Bhogilal Lala, Mavalankar and others launched this boycott in Ahmedabad. Similarly, some lawyers followed suit at other places too in Gujarat. Those lawyers who had joined this boycott began to assist in conducting Congress activities by occupying important positions.

Work worthy of being specially mentioned was done in Bombay City in connection with the boycott of Government educational institutions. Sarojini Naidu, Vithalbhai Patel, Gangadharrao Deshpande, Khadilkar, Jamnadas Mehta and other leaders often addressed students and their speeches used to produce a good effect on them. A big proportion of students were national-minded and they left schools and colleges in massive numbers. No pressure of any kind was put on those students who wanted to continue their studies and they could do so without any let or hindrance. In this way, this work of boycott was done with complete non-violence.

Prof Gidwani of the Gujarat Vidyapith often went to Bombay from Ahmedabad and used to do propaganda among students. Teachers and professors appealed to the students that they should not quit schools and colleges, but the fire of patriotism had kindled so well among the students that not

caring for such saintly advice, they came out in large numbers. Among these were some who had only to give the last college examination. Despite being brilliant and first-rate students, they resisted the attraction for degrees and came out.

The Rashtriya Mahavidyalaya was started in Bombay and Prof Puntambekar, who had offered non-cooperation, was appointed to run it. Just about this time Prof Malkani gave up Delhi College. Gandhiji had sent him to help in the work of the Mahavidyalaya. Gulzarilal Nanda was doing research work on behalf of the Lucknow College. Later on under Gandhiji's inspiration he offered non-cooperation and joined the work of the Vidyalaya. Bhansali was at the St. Xavier's College. He too went there as a teacher.

A Vinayamandir was started for the pupils of secondary schools. Its management was assigned to Uchharangrai Oza. High-minded friends like Khandubhai Desai, Dilkhush Diwanji, Gokulbhai Bhatt and others began to work there as teachers. All these were brilliant students who had come after leaving Government colleges. A Rashtriya Pathashala was opened even for girls. Babanrao Gokhale undertook to look after the work of the schools and colleges. His wife, Avantikabai Gokhale, was a devoted disciple of Gandhiji.

Arrangements were made at the Sadhak Ashram at Andheri for those students who wished to engage in constructive activities. This Ashram was conducted by an ex-Subedar of Baroda State, Keshavrao Deshpande. In this Ashram lived Pundalik, an associate of Gulzarilal and Gangadharrao Deshpande, who helped in running it. Those students who had joined this Ashram had strong spiritual urges and they made every possible effort to promote constructive activities.

In March 1921 at the Working Committee meeting of the Congress at Bezwada, a resolution about the Tilak Memorial came at the instance of Gandhiji. Gandhiji was keen to complete this work as early as possible.

It was decided to collect Rs 30 lakhs out of the sum of Rs 1 crore from Bombay City. The people of Bombay had taken an enthusiastic part in the fight for independence and economically also it was possible to collect this amount there. Hence immediately on return from Bezwada, thought was given to this work in Bombay. And in accordance with the advice of Umar Subhani and Jamnalalji and of merchants par-

ticipating actively in Congress work, seeing an easy money position in the market, it was decided to take this work in hand. Meanwhile, a programme was considered for collection of donations from leading merchants of the big and small markets of Bombay. All people, small and big, contributed according to their capacity and began to feel one with the movement for swaraj and this way the message of the movement reached every home. Organisations of the different wards and localities also began to collect their humble donations and deposit them into the Congress office. Women and girls too started parting with their jewellery. Collections began to come in even at meetings held for the purpose. Thus with the complete co-operation of the commercial community and the general public, over Rs 30 lakhs were collected.

Thus arrived June 30. On making up accounts that day, it was found that the collections had reached the Rs 98 lakh mark. Gandhiji was insistent that they should take the collections to a crore of rupees before that evening and an announcement made about it. Umar Subhani and Jamnalal Bajaj acceded to this wish of his and by contributing one lakh of rupees more each the same day, fulfilled Gandhiji's desire and before evening an announcement was made to the effect that a crore of rupees had been collected.

Despite the debate on the bonfire of foreign cloth, this work was being done enthusiastically all over the country. At the outset clothes began to be received from important workers and their families and this gave an impetus to the work. My sister-in-law, Lilavatiben, used to take an active part in public work and when I talked the matter over with her, she gave me her saris and she began to ask women of her acquaintance too to do so. This way many respectable women of the city co-operated in this work and offered up their saris. The commercial community of Bombay used to participate enthusiastically in Congress work and many among them had taken the vow of swadeshi. We began to get clothes from them too. Students and teachers joining the national schools and colleges also began to assist in this work. A meeting of the A.I.C.C. took place in Bombay in July and an announcement of giving up foreign cloth in every way was made on August 1. That too greatly accelerated this work and enough clothes were to be had for bonfire of foreign cloth.

Parsis were mostly engaged in the liquor trade in Bombay City. An attempt was made to appeal to them to give up this profession. Burjorji Bharucha took interest in this work and assisted in contacting Parsis engaged in this trade. Special meetings of such people used to be held and they were requested to give their co-operation in this work, but this was very difficult work. Having been engaged in this trade, it was not possible for them to give up their profession. They depended for earning their livelihood on this business alone. It was even difficult to suggest an alternative profession, but even then attempts were being made in this direction.

The meeting of the A.I.C.C. was arranged at the Muzafar Hall at Grant Road. Members attended in good numbers and the work of this meeting was done with ardour. The programme drawn up by the Working Committee at Bezwada had been fully executed. All were happy over this. A sum of Rs 1 crore was to be collected for the Tilak Swaraj Fund by June 30 and this sum had been collected up to that date. Not only this, but an extra Rs 15 lakhs had been collected. One crore Congress members were to be enrolled. This work was more difficult than collecting funds. If wealthy people gave huge sums, comparatively speaking, even on contacting a smaller number of people, the target would be reached. Bombay City had to contribute Rs 30 lakhs, Bengal Rs 25 lakhs and Gujarat Rs 10 lakhs to the Fund. Thus Bombay City and these two provinces had contributed over 50 per cent. If one crore of people had been contacted in the matter of members, so many members would have been enrolled. Because the majority of people in the country lived in villages, it was very difficult to reach this figure. Even then over 50 per cent had become members. This was the result of the interest and enthusiasm shown in this work by workers and people.

The Government had drawn up a programme in connection with the visit of the Prince of Wales. According to it, the Prince was to land in Bombay on the morning of November 17. The Government had arranged a grand function to accord him a welcome at Apollo Bunder. Despite great respect for the Prince, the people were fighting against injustice. On such an occasion the Government's policy in arranging this programme without taking into consideration the popular feeling was to desist the people from fighting for

justice. Hence the Congress had on July 28, 29 and 30 declared boycott of this function and accordingly the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee had published appropriate directions and given a call to the people not to take part in it in any way.

At the time the Prince was to land, the Congress had organised in the compound of Subhani's Elphinstone Mill at Parel a programme of bonfire of foreign cloth. One of the considerations in this was that if this spot was far off from the place where the Prince was to be given a welcome, there would be little scope for friction. For this programme, workers and volunteers had engaged themselves since morning in making arrangements for the meeting at Parel and collecting clothes for the bonfire. While lighting the bonfire, Gandhiji had said that complete non-violence must be observed and despite provocations there should not be even the slightest violence. The people completed this programme of bonfire of foreign cloth with great enthusiasm and peace. The Parsis took a leading part in the function to honour the Prince of Wales at which Hindus and Muslims were displeased and communal riots broke out. At last as a result of Gandhiji's fast, peace was restored.

With regard to a new campaign, it was decided that it would be better if it was launched under Gandhiji's direct supervision. And if the battle was fought in Gujarat, it was the general opinion that Gandhiji would be able to lead it directly. Therefore it was decided to start the fight in Gujarat. In Gujarat, the choice was to be made between Anand taluka and Bardoli taluka. Once in 1918 a no-tax campaign had been launched in Kheda district. Hence the people of that district had a little bit of idea and experience of it. And they were fighters too. The people of Bardoli were certainly strong but at the same time they were peace-loving and easy to lead. Hence it was believed that they would observe well all conditions of mass satyagraha and so that taluka was chosen.

After these preparations were made and examining the whole situation closely, a Bardoli taluka conference was held on January 29, 1922 under the presidentship of Vithalbhai Patel. Here Gandhiji once again, spoke plainly about all the important questions relating to the fight and explained every-

thing. He presented a resolution for the fight and realising their responsibility well and gladly, the people passed it unanimously.

At about this time, news of the Chauri Chaura atrocities came like an earthquake or lightning. There is a village called Chauri Chaura in the Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh. A procession had been taken out there in connection with the national movement. The police harassed those people and fired on them, when the people turned back and attacked the police. When the policemen entered a thana to save their lives, the people set it on fire. When they came out, they were hacked to pieces and thrown into the fire. Thus 21 policemen were killed. Gandhiji was greatly shocked at this news and he forthwith decided to postpone the Bardoli satyagraha: "It is an inauspicious sign to begin the Bardoli struggle. This way two experiments with violence and non-violence cannot go on simultaneously." Expressing his untold sorrow, he wrote: "When our people die, my heart does not quail. But when even one man of the Government is killed, I feel ashamed."

When the Working Committee met in Bardoli on February 11, 1922, Gandhiji asked everyone to express his ideas clearly. Gandhiji's decision to postpone the satyagraha had greatly shocked the people at large and the people of Bardoli and even leaders had become despondent and also angry. Liberals like Malaviya, Jayakar and others had praised this step of Gandhiji's, but resolute non-cooperators were displeased. Finally, the Working Committee passed the resolution suspending the Bardoli satyagraha and it was decided to convene a meeting of the A.I.C.C. at Bombay or Delhi in order to ratify this decision.

The Bardoli satyagraha was postponed. People were asked to turn towards constructive activities, but the fight against the Government was on. Hence Gandhiji said that on the establishment of a peaceful and favourable atmosphere, he may, if necessary, certainly start civil disobedience again. There was no room for compromise. Birkenhead and Montagu held out great threats from England. Gandhiji gave an honourable and memorable reply to their daring in his article entitled "Shaking the Manes"; ". . . it is high time that the British people were made to realize that the fight that was

commenced in 1920 is a fight to the finish, whether it lasts one month or one year or many months or many years and whether the representatives of Britain re-enact all the indescribable orgies of the Mutiny days with redoubled force or whether they do not. I shall only hope and pray that God will give India sufficient humility and sufficient strength to remain non-violent to the end. Submission to the insolent challenges that are cabled out on due occasions is now an utter impossibility."

After the postponement of the Bardoli satyagraha, Gandhiji was becoming hardened against the Government's violence and in this state of affairs there was a possibility of his arrest even; hence he urged that if he were arrested, the people should maintain complete non-violence and push forward the Congress constructive programme.

After the violence of Chauri Chaura, Gandhiji had suspended the Bardoli satyagraha and as a result there was restlessness in the Congress. There had arisen a storm of protest against him. When the A.I.C.C. met in Delhi in February, this opposition had shown itself. But on point of principle, he was steady even in this storm. He had come to know that he would be arrested any time. And he had even given instructions to people about what they should do if he was arrested. The talk of his arrest was in the air. While he was going from Delhi to Ahmedabad, I too had heard its echoes and hence Gulzarilal and I went to see him at Mehsana and he gave us all the news. Then from Ahmedabad station I went to the Sabarmati Ashram with Gandhiji and was returning home, when the Police Superintendent met me on the way and told me that I was being put under arrest. From there taking me with him, he went to the Satyagraha Ashram and arrested Gandhiji too. He was given time to get ready. Gandhiji met everyone in the Ashram, all said a prayer together, sang the bhajan, "Vaishnava Jana", and he bade farewell to all. From the Ashram we were straight taken to Sabarmati jail. That day was March 10.

There we had to stay as undertrial prisoners. Wacha was the Jail Superintendent then. Earlier he was in the Education Department. He used to behave very well with us. We had a different enclosure and Gandhiji was lodged in a cell in the middle of a long row of cells and I was confined in

another adjoining cell. We used to get our food from outside and we were permitted to sleep in the open at night.

Spinning was of course done in Sabarmati jail. We could have any number of books to read as we wished. We had all facilities there. Many people from outside used to visit us. The entire day was spent in meeting people and discussing urgent problems.

Among them Vithalbhai Patel and other leaders too called on Gandhiji. The question what was to be done after he was sentenced was discussed. It was Gandhiji's clear view that after him no one should offer satyagraha. He said, "Only he who is a true satyagrahi can offer satyagraha and I alone am such a satyagrahi. There is no question of anyone else offering satyagraha after me." Then Vithalbhai asked what they should do. In this connection Gandhiji said that they should carry on khadi work with all their energy.

Thereafter he made a written statement in which he revealed the agony of his heart and indicated how he changed from a staunch co-operator to a confirmed non-cooperator and said: ". . . I should explain why from a staunch loyalist and co-operator, I have become an uncompromising disaffected and non-cooperator."

He made this clarification at length and finally said: "I hold it to be a virtue to be disaffected towards a Government which in its totality has done more harm to India than any previous system. India is less manly under the British rule than she ever was before. Holding such a belief, I consider it to be a sin to have affection for the system. And it has been a precious privilege for me to be able to write what I have in the various articles tendered in evidence against me."

Explaining the essence of his non-violent non-cooperation struggle, he said: "In my humble opinion, non-co-operation with evil is as much a duty as is co-operation with good. But in the past, non-co-operation has been deliberately expressed in violence to the evil-doer. I am endeavouring to show to my countrymen that violent non-co-operation only multiplies evil, and that as evil can only be sustained by violence, withdrawal of support of evil requires complete abstention from violence. Non-violence implies voluntary submission to the penalty for non-co-operation with evil. I am here, there-

fore, to invite and submit cheerfully to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is deliberate crime, and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen."

I wanted to say nothing. When asked, I pleaded guilty. Gandhiji's statement made a profound impression on the judge and all present in court.

Then the judge pronounced his verdict. In it he expressed great respect and goodwill towards Gandhiji. Just as Lokamanya Tilak was sentenced to six years' imprisonment for treason, Gandhiji was awarded six years' imprisonment and I received six months' simple imprisonment each on two counts or a total of one year's S.I. and on the third count a fine of Rs 1,000 or in default six months' S.I.

This case was conducted in a very grave manner. The spectators were keen to know what Gandhiji would say in his deposition and what the judge would say in his judgment. But about its outcome, there was a sort of finality in their minds. Everyone believed that there would positively be a sentence, whether light or heavy. Therefore there was not much enthusiasm in any of the spectators about the legal proceedings. After the sentences were pronounced, we were allowed freely to see everyone and then we were taken back to Sabarmati jail.

After we were sentenced, it was decided to move us to Yeravda from Sabarmati. But this was kept absolutely a secret. From Sabarmati we were put into a railway carriage and that locked bogey was joined to a mail train. On reaching Bombav, that carriage was detached at Dadar station and joined to a train bound for Poona. Police Superintendent Hailey had accompanied us up to the Poona-bound train. He respected Gandhiji and he had left a basket of fruits in the compartment for us. The mail train was due to reach Yeravda in the evening. When evening came, I finished my meal in the train itself. But Gandhiji said he would eat after reaching the jail. We arrived at Yeravda jail at 5 or 6 in the evening.

A Unique Awakening*

J. P. BHANSALI

WHILE A STUDENT, I was inspired by India's famous revolutionary, Shyamji Krishna Varma. He was a relative of mine. It was only natural that revolutionary ideas should make a deep impress on my mind in my youth. These ideas did not allow me to sit quiet. I had such enduring trust in Varmaji that I went to Switzerland to see him. But I returned early from there because he wished to free India through an armed revolution, whereas I believed in a non-violent revolution. At this time, I felt that I should join some peace-loving social service organisation and serve the country. I desired to serve my compatriots by enrolling myself as a life member of the Servants of India Society in Poona. But when the leaders of the Society came to know that the revolutionary Varmaji was a relative of mine, they declined to enrol me as a member. This event saddened me a lot, but my keenness for national service went on increasing.

This event occurred about the year 1919-20. At that time, the atmosphere of non-cooperation was arising in the country. The spark of this agitation was spreading slowly in all the corners of India. The sea of new life was surging in the nation. The whole of India was reverberating with the cry of victory of Bapu, the Father of the Nation. Deshbhandhu Chittaranjan Das proposed the non-cooperation movement resolution at the Nagpur session of the Congress. Lala Lajpat Rai seconded it. A definite programme put forth by the session produced a great effect on the people. The latter forgot for a time communalism and narrow sectarianism. Everywhere there were demonstrations of Hindu-Muslim unity. The people boycotted hundreds of schools and colleges which were being run on behalf of the British Government. National schools were opened in the country. Panchayats were set up everywhere. After the Bezwada Congress, the membership of the Congress grew and touched the 50 lakh

*These reminiscences of J. P. Bhansali have been received through the kind courtesy of Krishna Gopal Vankhed's Guruji.

mark. At this time only, Bapu launched the Tilak Swaraj Fund. In response to Bapu's appeal, the people gave away one crore of rupees and along with it they gave a *dakshina* of rupees one lakh also. That is to say, in all a total of rupees one crore and one lakh was collected for this Fund. Bapu utilised this money to conduct the agitation. The people's enthusiasm only went on increasing.

The impact of this non-cooperation movement of Bapu was so profound that twenty lakhs of spinning-wheels began to ply in all nooks and corners of the country. A large number of people in the country clothed themselves with cloth made from yarn spun by them. People began to boycott foreign cloth. Everywhere the wave of satyagraha surged. A number of well-known lawyers in the country gave up their practice. These included Jawaharlal Nehru's father Motilal Nehru and Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das also. In order to enthuse the people greatly, Bapu had predicted that the country would soon become free, but I felt this to be almost improbable. There was no doubt that there was a unique awakening among the people. There was new life among labour. There was a strike on the Assam-Bengal Railway. In the Midnapore district of Bengal, there was a no-land-revenue campaign. At that time, the Rashtriya Seva Dal was established. Volunteers and others also commenced the picketing of foreign cloth shops. The result of this was that there arose the fear in the minds of the officials of the alien Government that if this movement went on for some years, British rule would end.

How could I let go such a fine opportunity? So far I had not even seen Bapu; but the idol of Bapu's truth and non-violence had already been enthroned in my heart. I too launched satyagraha and because of my connection with the revolutionaries, the Government sentenced me to a long period of incarceration. I was greatly inspired by that movement of Bapu's. After coming out of jail, I started work as a professor at the Bombay National College. At this same time, I was also working as a teacher at the Sadhak Ashram at Andheri. But this did not bring me peace of mind. At last, within a few days, I left for the Sabarmati Ashram at Ahmedabad. Thereafter, naturally I belonged to Bapu forever. In the beginning, I did not have much faith in non-violence and truth; my leanings were towards revolutionary ideas but after coming into contact with Bapu, I adopted the principles of non-

violence and truth forever. Looking at India's history and the circumstances then prevailing, only the principles of truth and non-violence could take the country towards its objective. I was convinced of this point and I have been following those same principles to date.

The non-cooperation movement was going on in the various provinces with great celerity. Under Vallabhbhai Patel's leadership, that movement acquired a historic character in Bardoli. On February 5, 1922, people in village Chauri Chaura in Uttar Pradesh set fire to a police station, in which 22 policemen perished. No sooner did Bapu receive news of this violent event than he became sad and he forthwith postponed this agitation. I felt again and again that we had still to fight this battle for freedom. This agitation was merely the beginning of the people's awakening.

Translated from the Hindi.

Entry into the Arena

GOKULBHAI BHATT

A RESIDENT of village Hardia Hathal in a small native state called Sirohi (Arbud Desh) in south-west Rajputana, I was studying in Bombay. I was doing matriculation. One day in the morning as I was running on the beach wanting to go home, an incident took place. Opposite Churni Road Station to its west there was a garden, which used to be opened rather late in the morning. The gate on the north used to be locked. An Englishman wished to take a walk in it. Seeing the lock, he was exasperated and, angrily applying his full force, he kicked the gate open. When the gardener came running, he was threatened, reprimanded and I remember that the gentleman gave him a slap too. I was watching this and began to think why he did so. I went near the gate and read the notice on it. The opening time was slightly later, so the gardener had not opened the gate. The gardener was not at fault. The chokidar, poor man, was frightened.

I did not know who that Englishman was. There was British rule in India and any foreigner could dominate over us, we were slaves; because we were ruled by others they would dare to beat up a black Indian who was even innocent. Such thoughts arose in my student mind. What could I do? I had no courage to invite a fight, but I wrote a letter to the editor of a fearless national newspaper, *The Bombay Chronicle*, and threw light on the entire episode. The letter was published the very next day and those friends who read it thanked the writer. I had requested the editor to publish the letter under a nom de plume. On the third day, I read it out to the gardener.

This is an inspiring incident in my life. Dormant patriotism began to blossom forth. This incident took place about 1917-18. I used to stay in Bombay in a tiny suburb thereof, Vile Parle (this has now become a town with a population of about two to two and a half lakhs). I could see India's Dada-

bhai Naoroji when he was driving in an open carriage from Versova to Vile Parle. I had read Dadabhai's biography as also a collection of his speeches and writings. I had heard the roar—"Swarajya is my birthright and I will have it"—of the *mantra* of swarajya of the saintly Lokamanya Tilak Maharaj. Dr Annie Besant's Home Rule activities were having an impact on me. On the other hand, I listened to speeches to student organisations by people like Surendranath Banerjea, I was inspired by the holy sight and oratory of Malaviya Maharaj and I was awokened by the conch-sound of Gandhiji's non-violent non-cooperation. I was stirred.

To protest against the Rowlatt Act, I began to participate in fasts, hartals, sale of proscribed literature and other activities. My mind was gripped by such events as Lokamanya Tilak's death in the Sardar Griha in Bombay as also sight of Gandhiji in the funeral procession and the tribute paid to the Lokamanya by Father Blader of the St. Xavier's College, Bombay, in a meeting (in which he had referred to the Lokamanya as a man of iron will); and the programme of boycotting the courts, schools and colleges and giving up Government posts that was placed before the country.

My future programme of studies, of proceeding abroad, etc., was put off. The country must be freed, the heavy chains on the feet began to be unbearable. I was regarded as a nationalist in the college. The non-cooperation movement was making itself felt. I gave up college. I intended to be a teacher at a national educational institution in Bombay and to prosecute my studies further. I proved a great disappointment to my dear mother, father and my brothers, but they did not deter me from taking part in the movement to free the country. It was my good fortune that they blessed me saying that it was enough if one from our family engaged himself in national service.

In those days I used to do propaganda about the non-cooperation movement. I began to feel happy in identifying myself fully with such items of work as spinning and making others spin on the spinning-wheel, wearing and making others wear khadi, making collections for the Tilak Swaraj Fund, enrolling Congress members, putting an end to the practice of untouchability, having bonfires of foreign cloth and the Khilafat.

Having been elected a delegate to the Ahmedabad Congress of the year 1921, my responsibility increased. I came into contact with Mahatmaji and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. I began to work as a soldier of swaraj. The Bardoli satyagraha had been announced. Aspirations were rising. The only objective before us was to take swaraj within a year. I had decided to go to jail and to stand with a bare chest if bullets were fired. I had read Bankim Babu's revolutionary novel, *Anandmath*, in Bengali. I had understood "Vande Mataram" and the countrywide swadeshi movement consequent to the partition of Bengal. Therefore, a wave of sacrifice was surging within me. When would we be free? When would British rule end? We used to sing a number of national songs, make so many rhymes and used to get people to shout slogans:

Tere liye hi jeena

Tere liye hi marna

Ye jan meri mata

Kurban aj karna.

*Sarafaroshi ki tamanna ab hamare dil mein hai
Dekhana hai zor kitna bazu-e-katil mein hai.*

I want to live only for you

I want to die only for you

This my life, my mother,

This is to be sacrificed today.

There is a strong desire in our hearts to offer up our heads

It is to be seen how much power the killer has in him.

*Vakt ane de bata dengay tuze ay asman
Ham abhi se kya bata dain kya hamare dil
mein hai?*

Let the time come, we shall show you.

Oh heaven!

What can we say now what there is in our hearts?

*Ay matrubhoomi tere charnon mein sheesh
namdun*

Tere hi kam aun, tere hi geet gaun.

Oh motherland, I shall bow my head only at your feet

I shall be of use only to you, I shall sing songs
only of you.

Meri mata ke sir par taj rahe.

Let the crown remain on my mother's head.

We used to sing such lines in processions. We were full of energy. "Now we shall be satyagrahis, and bring freedom home." I used to live with such aspirations. We used to ply the spinning-wheel and teach students. But there was only one objective—to live or die under Gandhiji's leadership.

The Chauri Chaura tragedy occurred and Gandhiji postponed the satyagraha. All were disappointed. What sort of leader was this? There were lots of discussions. But Gandhiji stuck fast to truth and non-violence. He was a leader. He wanted to try this experiment on a national scale. Preparations had to be made therefor. This plea of Gandhiji appeared reasonable. Hence there were no-changers like Rajaji, the Sardar, Rajendra Babu, Kripalani, Gangadharrao Deshpande, Shankarrao Deo, Jamnalal Bajaj and others who held that they should not enter the councils. But Gandhiji allowed the Swaraj Party to be formed. He did not prove a hurdle to it. He was a man of practical sense.

We plunged into constructive work. Through it we busied ourselves in such work as organising village workers, khadi, village industries, removal of untouchability, prohibition, labour organisation, etc. So far the Congress had not proclaimed its objective as complete independence. When on the banks of the Ravi river in Lahore on a December night in 1929 our beloved leader Pandit Jawaharlal declared the objective of complete independence, the dark night began to glitter and the dumb shouted "Inquilab Zindabad". Plants which had drooped began to revive. We began to dance. That moment cannot be forgotten. The Lahore cold became ineffective, so much heat was generated in our bodies. There was new life. We took the vow of complete independence. All this took place as a result of Gandhiji's guidance, his presence and his blessings.

I Remember

KAMALADEVI CHATTOPADHYAY

TO THOSE OF my generation the real political history of India seems to begin with the Gandhi era. All that went before, the sporadic eruptions like bomb throwings and other political assassinations or attempted violence, seemed rather romantic.

When Gandhiji entered the Indian political arena, I was still a student in my teens. We were becoming politically awake, rather early, more so perhaps than the earlier generation, for great upheavals were taking place especially in the context of a global war and its manifold repercussions.

In a way I was fortunate in growing up in rather a vibrant atmosphere. My mother was politically very alive. She was a voracious reader and kept abreast of current affairs. We used to get *Kesari* and *Kal* in Marathi from Poona, then the chief base of Tilak and his associates, and our political hunger was continuously fed on this highly surcharged literature. We shared with agony and shame Tilak's cruel incarceration in Mandalay jail. Some 43 years later when I visited that jail and stood in the cell where he was said to have lived and written his commentaries on the *Gita*, I could so vividly recall how I had years ago tried to picture him in a cell, having little idea of what a prison or jail cell meant. His release seemed to electrify the air and I presumed big events would now follow. Alas! he died very soon, on August 1, 1920, just the time Gandhiji had planned to launch the civil disobedience movement.

Freedom was yet a vague term and there were many problems that troubled me in my own little life for which so far no answers had been vouchsafed to me.

I had, as far back as my memory goes, been greatly puzzled and made unhappy by social differences and economic inequalities. Growing up in a fair amount of comfort, these queries and a deep burgeoning resentment towards inequalities

and discriminations began to embitter my life and infect continuous strains in my family relationships. Now here came a leader who seemed troubled by the same injustices and was out to identify himself with the lesser members of our society. What is more, he had a way to show to a newer life a programme of action which was satisfying and made politics for *those of my generation real*. He did not have that passion for revivalism, to me very negative and chauvinistic, turning one's back on what was and attempting a reversal of what to us was, the natural forward flow of life. Youth is impetuous, cries out for speedy changes, quick results and Gandhiji was essentially a man of action.

I did not meet Gandhiji until after the Champaran struggle which had fascinated me. Here was something in which the real people of the country were involved. Through their organisation, will, determination and loyalty they could stand up to the oppression of the planters backed by a foreign rule. Exploitation was no vague term. Here it was concrete and more meaningful to my own growing social awareness of the ills in our society. I was excited and intrigued by his mental attitude towards problems, his postures that indicated his personal reaction to situations as they arose, and his strong grip on the basic and vital need of the country, freedom, of which he never lost sight. In fact, all problems radiated from this central focal point. To me they had almost a personal intimacy as they seemed related to my own conflicts in my home and family over the social distances and the economic levels, not to mention the many prevailing social discriminations against women. Here again Gandhiji stood up for women's rightful place in society and public life.

As the World War ended, it gave off sparks. It had generated fresh hopes for the subject people. The righteousness of the war had been trumpeted about over the years. The day it ended in victory for the allies was celebrated in the open *maidan* with sports and entertainment in which I won a prize. I took it as a good omen, that the long-awaited freedom was at hand, little guessing what was in store for us.

As we moved into 1919, it was becoming evident that the accelerated political stirrings generated by the post-war climate angered the rulers and soon roused their wrath, and they decided on severe measures. So the harsh and repressive clauses of the grim Defence of India Act were placed per-

manently on the statute book, historically termed the Rowlatt Act.

I remembered the shock I had as this news stood out in large black letters, like a death sentence. It seemed like a real slap in the face. Then came Gandhiji's call to observe one day of fast, prayer and preparedness for the big plunge: satyagraha. That one should prepare oneself for a great action by self-purification is no doubt an ancient idea common to all. But here the action projected was original and novel. The application of this concept of satyagraha as a political weapon was startling and exciting. It was like gazing on a new instrument, complicated and powerful to operate. There were detractors who were aghast with fear and felt Gandhiji was letting loose a demoniacal weapon which would not only cause destruction but ultimately recoil on the one who had let it loose. Like all youth, I was in dead earnest and found myself fighting many wordy battles all over the place. But my real preparedness lay in silent meditation morning and evening in the privacy of my own room. I prayed earnestly that I may some day become a worthy instrument through which satyagraha could be practised, for I was not sure if a girl of sixteen would qualify for the great battle to be launched, although physically and mentally I felt strong enough.

I heard that Gandhiji was starting a Satyagraha Sabha, members of which were pledged to oppose and disobey unjust laws and court imprisonment. Gandhiji was to be in Bombay on the auspicious day, April 6, to launch it. So thither I proceeded to be nearest to this human dynamo who had galvanised the whole country into tremendous motion. Chowpatty from early morning was covered by human sand. One saw nothing but heads. Like on a holy day everyone had a dip in the sea. This vast sea formed itself into a procession and moved into the city.

Sarojini Naidu very kindly offered to take me to a meeting nearby next morning which Gandhiji was to address. That was where I had my first glimpse of him. Sarojini had lovingly nicknamed him Micky Mouse when this rather tantalising character came to be invented by the film world. But at this moment to me he was just a man, a very human man. Though there was a lot of power and strength about him, it was the compassion in his eyes that struck a deep chord within me. Mercy, compassion, charity seem today out of fashion. They are

no more in circulation as it were. One almost never comes across them in modern writings. To me, however, they have always seemed most precious among human elements. The meeting had actually been convened to enable those who wished to pledge themselves to adhere to swadeshi and communal unity. Compared with the vast concourse of the previous day, this was, I would say, a small gathering. As he read out the pledges Gandhiji commented on this feature, how exciting events drew crowds while for constructive work only a few sober people came. He however explained the meaning and significance of the pledge, and the grave responsibility assumed by those who chose to take it.

By evening tragic news of a reign of terror having been let loose by the regime came in. On the Bombay front all was yet quiet. The hartal had been complete. As regards the civil disobedience to be launched, Gandhiji had advised that only such laws be countered as would easily lend themselves to mass action. At that time too he advocated the breaking of the Salt Law, which a decade later was to become a nationwide movement and challenge the British might. The only thing that I saw happen on this occasion was the sale of Gandhiji's two proscribed books: *Hind Swaraj* (in political revolutionary parlance this would be dubbed a very tame book), and *Sarvodaya*, actually a Gujarati adaptation of Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. It seems incredible today that these were characterised as seditious. Even to me at the time, bristling with fire, it seemed comic, as though it were some kind of joke. What followed was even more so—we had a lot of fun though feeling very heroic selling what we understood as banned literature, gravely warning the buyers that they might be arrested and jailed. But no one seemed concerned. The buyers ranged from the simple who took the books like sacred *prasad*, the serious who felt self-consciously proud of their patriotism to the sophisticated who shrugged their shoulders nonchalantly as much as to say they did not care. People paid what they could or what took their fancy, some gave all that was on their person and money seemed just to pour in. It showed the prevailing mood of the people.

What followed was a complete anti-climax. The Government took no action, made no reference to what proved like a mini civil disobedience. We heard though from Government quarters that the ban had been on the first edition of the books and the ones on sale were only reprints to which the prohibitory order did not apply, hence no law had been broken! For us

who had worked ourselves up to fever heat, this was almost a crushing disappointment.

But this was, however, to prove the calm before a storm. The interception of Gandhiji's journey to the Punjab and his being forcibly brought back to Bombay is now part of history. Being in that excited crowd to welcome him on his return was an unforgettable experience. It was something I had never seen or known before. Though the people were fearfully agitated, they were still quiet, impatient to have a glimpse of their idol. Almost instinctively a procession came into formation as the long-awaited leader was sighted, shouting "Vande Mataram" and "Allaho Akbar". Just at that moment a body of mounted police was sighted halting the procession. Then everything seemed to happen all at once. Before one could even think what to do, the horsemen charged with their lances, driving the crowd into confusion. People then were new to these tactics. Later such attacks were anticipated, one waited and faced them with tenacity, and mostly stood one's ground. Here everything was new, unexpected and people were taken completely unawares. The horsemen went riding roughshod over bewildered humanity. I was stunned and enraged. I had only read of such brutality, never witnessed it. The horsemen did not seem to care whom they trod on nor what havoc their lances wrought.

By now news came pouring in from other parts of the country of police violence against people, particularly from Delhi, Lahore, Amritsar. More horrors followed topped by the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. I was terribly shaken. All the young people particularly the students were up, ready for any action.

Here was revolution but of a very different kind. This was an open appeal to the people at large at all levels to defy the British regime and non-cooperate with it, no matter what the consequence. It astounded you by its very simplicity. I heard Gandhiji expound his non-violent non-cooperation programme. Though he talked in a gentle tone, there was a hard steely ring in it. Those eyes so full of affection and kindness threw out sparks as it were. "This is going to be a great struggle with a very powerful adversary," he emphasised. "If you want to take it up, you must be prepared to lose everything, and you must subject yourself to the strictest non-violence and discipline." I was something of a doubting Thomas on the chances of maintaining complete non-violence. I was aware of the fierce anger which raged within my own bosom. More-

over who had ever in history won freedom without a violent struggle? These and many other doubts kept plaguing me. I talked of them to others. A lady who was close to Gandhiji but not in the political movement warned him against persons like me who really hung on the fringe but did not really believe in non-violence. I was surprised to receive one day a card from Gandhiji in which he expressed his unhappiness and to ask me not to join the movement if I did not believe in non-violence. The occasion for it however did not arise until a whole decade later by which time I found I had other equally difficult hurdles to cross with him.

For some time the Punjab was a sealed box, we could not know what was happening there. When martial law was finally lifted and people and news began to trickle through, we were horror-stricken. It were as though life and the world could never be the same. Until now whatever antagonism we had felt towards the English, it still had an element of friendliness and even respect for certain traits in their character. But that evaporated.

At this stage when Gandhiji seemed willing to co-operate with the Government in working the new Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, many of us were dismayed. But the shadow quickly passed. Not only did he in our eyes redeem himself, but also the entire leadership and the country when he succeeded in getting the Congress to accept non-violent non-co-operation. Once again the country was electrified. It was a wonder to us how the older sedate, cautious men fell into line with the sweep of this new leader. Veteran lawyers gave up practice, some their jobs. Students had the biggest hurdles, for many of the parents who were prepared for several other types of direct action grew distressed over any break in their children's education. I experienced a tragedy in my own circle when a student in a junior college joined the volunteers during the national week (not even the civil disobedience movement). His father castigated him so harshly he took it very much to heart, was stricken ill and was gone in less than a week.

I had no problem leaving my own school but on the understanding I would study privately, not "loaf around", as some were said to be doing. The scene was very spectacular nevertheless. This was becoming a mass movement, open, well-organised, no sneaking or hiding. It instilled into one a sense

of strength and dignity. One felt one could stand up to any indignity and challenge, any insult. For the first time we felt we too were self-respecting humans, not subject people to be cowed down. This naturally invited harsher measures from the authorities. More and more leaders came under arrest.

• As all individuals could participate in this movement through some form of action or contribution, my family enthusiastically offered our large house to start a national school for girls, as setting up of teaching institutions was one of the items of the programme. I wished I was old enough to qualify to teach as there seemed little else I could do. I took to spinning, learnt weaving and felt I was a part of the big struggle as Gandhiji laid great stress on these constructive activities. I helped also to collect funds, especially by organising cultural shows.

Just when the big movement was about to be launched in Bardoli, Gujarat, outbreaks of violence made Gandhiji cry a halt. The irony of it was that it was at this stage that he came to be arrested and sent to jail for writing an exquisite literary piece titled "Shaking the Manes". He started it by describing the British Lion shaking its manes. There can be few such literary compositions in the English language. I remember how emotionally shaken I was by its sheer beauty of imagery. Thus ended one very memorable chapter in India's long history and my own little span.

Resolution for Action

SHANKARRAO DEO

I BEGAN my public life under Gandhi's stewardship in the second half of 1919 in Champaran in Bihar.

After his return to India from South Africa, though Gandhi was ready to wait, he was in his heart of hearts deeply convinced that India's real freedom and true salvation lay in following the way of satyagraha and he was anxious, if not impatient, to demonstrate it to the Indian leaders and the people. Passing of the notorious Rowlatt Act, known in Indian history as the Black Act, by the Government of India in the beginning of 1919 gave Gandhi the first opportunity to put his conviction into practice on an all-India basis. No self-respecting people, according to him, could submit to this blackmail. To begin with, he asked his countrymen to observe a nationwide hartal on the 6th of April with one day's fast and prayers. This was a unique and very novel way of starting a political fight against a Government and broke all orthodox canons in this respect. But according to Gandhi, satyagraha was a process of self-purification and, therefore, it must start with an act of self-purification. The response of the nation to the call was unprecedented, its special feature being fraternisation of Hindus and Muslims. Millions and millions joined in fasting and prayer, but unfortunately to Gandhi's great chagrin this first essay in satyagraha on a national scale failed miserably because of mass violence, especially in the Punjab and Gujarat, Gandhi's home province. Gandhi confessed openly that he had committed a Himalayan blunder in asking the people to offer satyagraha without proper previous preparations and suspended it. Out of this arose what is known as the Punjab wrongs.

I accompanied my friends from Bihar to Amritsar to attend the annual Congress session in December as a visitor. The Amritsar Congress was a triumph for national self-respect as well as a trial of strength between the old orthodox political approach to the solution of national problems and

Gandhi's new moral way of dealing with them. Though the Amritsar Congress ended in a sort of compromise, Gandhi's matchless way of dealing with men and matters convinced the leaders and the people that he was a power to be reckoned with in future.

The Amritsar Congress was notable from another point of view also. In spite of inhuman atrocities and diabolical suppression by the foreign power, people's spirit was unbroken and they had gathered there in their thousands to listen to their leaders with confidence and expectancy. The welcome they gave to their leaders released from prison while the Congress session was going on was, to say the least, thunderous. Even today I see before my eyes the Ali brothers donning tall fur caps with a crescent moon, appearing on the platform and the spontaneous welcome given to them by the people present there.

Non-cooperation was born and was being preached by Gandhi and especially by the Muslim leaders when I returned to Poona from Champaran and started my work as a journalist. The betrayal by the British Cabinet of the Indian Muslims at the close of World War I by breaking the promises given to them in regard to the preservation of the Turkish Empire and of the sovereignty of the Sultan as the Khalifa brought Gandhi again to the forefront of Indian politics. The perfidy of the British Government had turned Gandhi from a loyal co-operator into a staunch non-cooperator. According to the Indian Muslims the continued existence of the Khilafat as a temporal no less than a spiritual institution was the very essence of their faith. The crookedness of the British statesmen forced them into a position in which they had no other choice except to wage a religious war against the British. According to their faith, though violence in defence of their religion was justified, non-violence was not tabooed or prohibited. This provided Gandhi with an opportunity and he suggested to his Muslim brethren non-cooperation in place of violence. For, to Gandhi the way of violence was brutish and inhuman. To be killed in defence of a noble cause, Gandhi maintained, was more noble than to kill and, in the ultimate analysis, it was thousandfold more successful.

As usual, the idea of non-cooperation was an inspired one. Gandhi says, "While I was listening to the speech of

Maulana Hasrat Mohani in the joint conference of Hindus and Muslims held in Delhi, it occurred to me that true opposition to the Government implied giving up co-operation with it and thus I struck on the word 'non-cooperation'." The Khilafat Committee at its session in Allahabad held in June 1920 declared its unanimous approval to the principle of non-co-operation, and the scheme of non-co-operation was formally inaugurated on the 1st of August.

The issue whether the Congress was to accept non-co-operation as its general policy for the redress of the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs and the attainment of swaraj came before its special session held in Calcutta in September 1920.

I did not attend the session as I was quite a novice in the political life of Poona and had not acquired any position or place in the Congress. Yet I was fully committed to the principle and programme of non-cooperation, so much so that I took a bet with my manager on Gandhi's success. Practically all the old guards, the intellectual giants and seasoned politicians of the country were arrayed against the Mahatma. Gandhi won by a very narrow majority in the Subjects Committee, but the delegates gave him a comfortable majority in the open session and thus he won. The Calcutta session was momentous in that the Congress ship under Gandhi's captaincy was launched on the stormy sea of non-cooperation finally to lay anchor in the harbour of swaraj in 1947.

After the Calcutta Congress I started, practically all alone in the beginning, to furrow the hard soil of Maharashtra. It must be admitted to the credit of those who had opposed Gandhi at Calcutta that their sense of loyalty to the Congress and discipline was so strong that practically all of those who had stood for election to the various legislatures withdrew their candidatures, yet in their heart of hearts they were not reconciled to the new change and the hard core from amongst them was in Maharashtra. As time went on, Gandhi in his campaign of non-violent non-cooperation had to face the bitterest opposition from the old followers of Lokamanya Tilak. But the people were with Gandhi; they turned their backs to the established and age-old methods of political agitation and soon the whole atmosphere in the country was surcharged. Luckily for people like me, Maharashtra did not prove an exception to the general rule. Though Gandhi's approach and programme were new, yet there was some kind of

spirit in them which appealed to the daring and sacrificing spirit of the people. They realised that it was their battle; so far in the struggle for their emancipation they were passive spectators, now for the first time they found that they were active participants or agents.

I was perhaps the first youth committed to the cause in Maharashtra. I hoisted high the flag of the new movement in Poona and started my real political life. A non-cooperation committee was formed with me as one of the secretaries. The boycott of elections was a great success in Maharashtra also; but other boycotts had not gathered momentum. Perhaps it was because people were waiting. The Nagpur Congress was to give its final approval to the non-violent non-cooperation programme. I was nominated as one of its delegates from Maharashtra. The number of delegates to the Nagpur Congress was the highest in the annals of the organisation. As rivers from all sides pour an immense quantity of water into the sea, so the special trains brought thousands of delegates and poured them into the city of Nagpur. A great number of Muslims and women were among the delegates. The Subjects Committee was a luminous galaxy of national leaders. To mention a few of the stars, there were President-elect Vijayaraghavachari, C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru, Rajagopalachari, the Ali brothers. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, thin and lean but proud Jinnah dressed in a faultless Western style and also thin, lean and meek Gandhi dressed in coarse white khadi sitting near each other. What a contrast in style and appearance! The presence of Col. Wedgewood, Mr Hollford Night and Mr Benspoor, fraternal delegates from the Labour Party of England, added dignity to the proceedings. Col. Wedgewood made a fervent appeal not to go in for non-co-operation; but it was of no avail. If I remember aright, immediately after the Colonel, Dr Pattabhi, sitting at the extreme end, stood up. The dignified way in which Dr Pattabhi fired the first shot from the Indian side impressed everyone present. The wordy battle raged intermittently for three or four days. Standing behind the Mahatma, Maulana Mahomed Ali, facing Jinnah, spoke piercingly like a thunderstorm. For a moment, it looked as if Jinnah was shivering in his pants. That speech of Mahomed Ali was superb and reached the high watermark of oratory of that session. The task of quenching the thirst and satisfying the curiosity about the happenings in the Subjects Committee of thousands of delegates and visitors

waiting outside every evening had fallen to my lot. The Nagpur Congress put its final seal of approval on the programme of non-violent non-cooperation.

The response to the Nagpur Congress was ample, but our difficulty in Maharashtra was that those like me who were on the side of non-cooperation were young and new in public life. And those who were ranged against them were tried soldiers trained under the leadership of the Lokamanya and they commanded in the beginning the respect and confidence of the people, especially of those belonging to the intellectual middle class. Not more than one or two leading lawyers in Maharashtra responded to the call of the Congress. Comparatively the response of the students was good. Many a national school sprang up all over Maharashtra and the Tilak Vidyapith was established. I was a teacher for some time in the national school started in Poona. Thousands of students in the country left their colleges and boycotted their examinations. Bengal responded splendidly to the call of Das.

The battle of non-cooperation went on nearly for a year and a half with many ups and downs; sometimes the hopes and expectations of the people rose high up to the heavens and sometimes they were dashed to pieces. There were thrilling scenes like the bonfire of foreign cloth in Bombay as well as depressing events like the Moplah riots and with them the pulse of the nation beat fast or slow. But those were days when life was truly worth living.

The Ahmedabad Congress of 1921 was completely clad in spotless white khadi, a symbol of purity and sacrifice of which Gandhi was the embodiment. Chairs, tables and all that disappeared; the way of the West was dispensed with. The delegates sat on the ground which was covered by khadar and were provided with khadi bags for their footwear. I was one of the delegates. The inside picture of the Congress was in complete harmony with its external appearance; Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's speech was in Hindi and was the shortest. Gandhi was appointed the sole executive authority of the Congress.

After the Ahmedabad Congress the attention of the whole nation was riveted on the Bardoli taluka because Gandhi had chosen it for his mass civil disobedience, including a no-tax campaign, to give final battle to the foreign power.

Gandhi gave one week's notice to the Government on February 1, 1922. We were all looking forward to the day of deliverance, when people's violence at Chauri Chaura cast a dark shadow all over India. Gandhi suspended the mass civil disobedience campaign, to be launched in Bardoli, to the deep disappointment of the people. He was bitterly and severely criticised by many of his colleagues but Gandhi was unrepentant. He was arrested on the 10th of March and sent to jail for 6 years after the historic trial at Ahmedabad. And thus the curtain was rung down the first act of the Greek drama of Indian freedom, the denouement of which, at the end of 27 years, was the birth of two free nations, Pakistan and Bharat.

Seeds Were Sown

R. R. DIWAKAR

IT IS FIFTY years since the Indian National Congress launched (1921) the non-violent non-cooperation movement under the unique leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The movement and its full significance cannot be easily understood if it is not seen in the perspective of the whole Indian struggle for independence. For instance, to call the movement by the single name, non-cooperation or NCO, is itself somewhat wrong; Gandhi suspended the full-fledged Bardoli campaign in 1922 because there was violence by Congress volunteers in distant Chauri Chaura. Gandhi, the author and leader of the movement, thought and believed that 'non-violent' was the main component of the non-violent non-cooperation movement. It is now part of India's recent history and we should try to understand it as thoroughly as possible.

The first real deep-seated nationwide awakening against British rule in India is to be traced to the swadeshi movement of 1905-06. The partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy, was the spark that triggered the mighty flame of mass agitation. The most potent voices which instilled a new patriotism and a fearless readiness to suffer were those of Tilak, Sri Aurobindo, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal and others. The twenty-first (1885-1906) session of the Congress at Calcutta under the presidentship of Dadabhai Naoroji passed a historic resolution. The fourfold programme laid down for the nation was to manufacture and use swadeshi goods, to boycott British goods, to start national educational institutions and to demand swaraj for India.

Between this swadeshi movement of 1905-06 and the movement of 1921, India saw the emergence of the Extremist Party led by Tilak and Sri Aurobindo; then came the Home Rule movement in 1914-18 by Tilak and Annie Besant, then the agitation against the Rowlatt Act in 1919 with Gandhi as the inspirer of a new way of fighting the British. We should also take note of Moderate leaders like Gokhale, Srinivasa

Sastri and others who believed in milder ways of thinking and doing. The ferocious spirit of the revolutionary school of politics which inspired many a young man to bold adventure and supreme sacrifice demands our attention and homage no less than that of others who worked tirelessly for the resurgence and independence of this great country. The British imperialists very grudgingly yielded a bit, no doubt, by bestowing the Reforms Act in 1919; but simultaneously through the Rowlatt Act, they armed the Executive with powers which could nullify all civil rights of citizens.

On top of it, adding insult to injury, the heartless butchery of the Jallianwala Bagh was praised and rewarded by the British rulers.

Gandhi, who had all along been loyal to the British Empire, felt impelled to declare that British rule in India was an unmixed evil. It did not deserve the least co-operation. Gandhi's non-cooperation with evil always meant readiness to co-operate with good. Gandhi perceived that violence of every kind, from black lies to merciless massacre, was the forte of the rulers. He wanted to give battle to them in a field of his own choice where the opponent was weak; that was the moral field. Gandhi was also convinced that it was utterly impracticable to fight the British with violence. How could an armless people fight with an Empire which was armed to its teeth? A few persons secretly armed and sniping at the British Empire would only invoke massive retaliation by the rulers. It would demoralise both the snipers and the masses. Gandhi's aim was a massive non-violent mass movement of people who would refuse to co-operate with the British rulers at as many points as possible.

This was the etiology of the non-violent non-cooperation movement. It was launched by the Congress through a resolution passed by its Nagpur session in December 1920. The resolution called upon the people of India to non-cooperate with the British Government through manifold boycotts—boycott of titles and awards, of schools and other educational institutions, of courts, of service and so on. Though it was not mentioned in the resolution, the voluntary picketing of liquor shops became part and parcel of the movement throughout India.

As far as I remember, I have always belonged to the

extremist school of politics. Having been born in 1894, I was hardly eleven when the swadeshi movement of 1905-06 swept the country. My father, a railway servant, subscribed to *Kesari*, the Marathi weekly edited by Tilak, and to the English journal *Amrita Bazar Patrika* edited by Motilal Ghosh. Later I read *Karmayogin* and *Vandemataram* in which articles by Sri Aurobindo appeared. I volunteered to collect the Paisa Fund at that time for a swadeshi glass factory. I took part in picketing and attended Tilak's speeches in Belgaum and Shahapur. Gangadharrao Deshpande was the leader of Karnataka at that time and also later he worked under Gandhi.

Somehow, as a result of the influence of the swadeshi movement and leaders like Tilak and Sri Aurobindo, I had made up my mind not to enter Government service. After graduation in 1916, I joined a private school as a teacher. I was thinking of a weekly journal to propagate national ideas and ideals. The rising tide of the national movement had at its head the Extremist leader Lokamanya Tilak till 1920 when he expired. Gandhi had already won his way into the hearts of the masses by 1920. The very day, that is, August 1, 1920, on which Tilak expired in Bombay, Gandhi declared non-violent non-cooperation with the British as the only remedy for righting the Khilafat wrong. The Khilafat Conference adopted the resolution on non-violent non-cooperation suggested by Gandhi. Thus the Muslims of India were the first to take to the new methods suggested by Gandhi, but it was entirely for a religious objective. Then came the special session of the Congress in September 1920 in Calcutta and then the annual plenary session in December in Nagpur.

By that time I had already resigned from my professorship in the Arts College at Dharwar and was first preparing for starting and editing a Kannada weekly called *Karmaveer*. The name of the journal was indicative of the way my mind was working. Tilak with all his extremism and with the legal and constitutional means, and his stand about "responsive co-operation" with the Government was left far behind and I had imperceptibly stepped into Gandhi's camp and his multiple extremism, social, political and moral.

I attended the Nagpur session of the Congress in the last week of December 1920 and returned a complete convert to the programme adopted there. Almost every Tilakite in Karnataka, including Gangadharrao, became a follower of

Gandhi and remained so to the end of the struggle for freedom, so much so, that Karnataka was called Gandhi's province. It was unfortunate that the Justice Party of Madras had inspired what was called the Brahmin-non-Brahmin movement in Karnataka and most of the non-Brahmin leaders kept out of the Gandhian movement at that time. But the Muslims on account of the Khilafat agitation were with the Congress. Thus it was a Brahmin-Muslim complex which worked vigorously in the Gandhian movement of 1921-22, with the help of such of the non-Brahmin leaders and their followers as chose to respond to the call.

I had already joined the Congress and was the Secretary of the District Congress Committee of Dharwar. With the help of my close friends, I had already started the weekly *Karmaveer* in February 1921. Gandhi came out in March with a triple programme which was called the Bezwada programme. It was to be completed in three months by the end of June 1921. It consisted in enrolling a crore of four-anna Congress members, in collecting a crore of rupees for the Tilak Swaraj Fund and in introducing a crore of charkhas in the country.

Though the whole of Kannada-speaking area, including the native states of those days, was under the jurisdiction of the Karnataka Provincial Congress Committee, vigorous activities were carried on mostly in the British part of the province. Gadag was the Congress headquarters in Karnataka, and Dharwar as well as Belgaum was the storm centre.

With all these limitations, the response which Karnataka gave to the call of the nation could be said to be satisfactory. More than a hundred practising advocates suspended their practice, thousands of students abstained from Government-owned schools, about forty national schools were started, and in some parts Panchayats were established to give justice to the people. The Bezwada programme was substantially carried out. At the end of the movement, that is, by the time that Gandhi suspended the Bardoli campaign in 1922, most of the prominent political workers such as Gangadharrao, Shrinivasrao Kaujalgi, Majli, Hanumantrao Kaujalgi and others were already in jail. Those including myself, who were in Yeravda jail at that time, had occasion to meet Gandhi after he was sentenced to six years' imprisonment in March 1922. It is said that the all-India total of political prisoners in the movement was of the order of thirty thousand.

I may now refer to the second quarter of 1921 and thereafter. Some incidents which happened in Dharwar are very interesting. Incidentally they drew the attention of the whole of India and brought all-India leaders like Lajpat Rai and Maulana Shaukat Ali to meet us in Dharwar jail.

M. B. Kabboor, a prominent advocate of Dharwar, was one of my collaborators in conducting the *Karmaveer* weekly. Painter was the District Collector and Magistrate for Dharwar. The *Karmaveer* had hardly breathed for a few months; but the over-sensitive hardened bureaucrat, Painter, thought it fit to summon Kabboor and me to his chambers and administer a threat in rather unparliamentary language. He said, "I am thirsting for your blood" and asked us to be careful about our writings. We simply said, "Please yourself" and left him at that. This created quite a stir in the minds of the local intelligentsia as well as in the public mind.

In the meanwhile, spontaneous and vigorous picketing of liquor shops by Khilafat and Congress volunteers had begun all over Karnataka and more so in Dharwar. It was June 30, the last day when the Bezwada Congress programme had to be fulfilled. In the evening, as Secretary of the DCC, I was rendering the report of the programme to a crowded public meeting. In the midst of it, deafening shots rang through the air from about two to three furlongs away. The sound came clearly from the location of the liquor shops! Early that day, two volunteers had been sentenced to six months' imprisonment for picketing that very shop. After sending them to jail in a big procession, the whole crowd had converged and concentrated on picketing that shop. The police were perhaps waiting for such an opportunity. There might have been some mischief-makers or agents provocateurs, who tried to set fire to the bamboo *tathi* outside the shop. Some might have rushed into the shop and broken some glasses and furniture. The owners of such shops were naturally in league with the police. Earlier, Guttal, an advocate, had been attacked while picketing another shop and had a fractured elbow at the hands of hired hooligans. This was the atmosphere and the local setting when on the 30th of June evening, a posse of police, with Sub-Inspector Shivalingappa at the head, advanced towards the crowd at the liquor shop and shot straight into it, killing three and wounding about twenty. Following the sound of shots came the plaintive cries of the wounded and many of us rushed to the spot to give succour to them. The

police had cordoned off the access to the main road and we had to be satisfied with lifting those who were accessible and taking them to doctors.

This seemed however to be the beginning of the deadly drama "of thirsting for blood". Next day, the 1st of July, 1921, Kabboor and I were the first to be marched off to jail. We were soon followed by twenty-six others including Guttal, the advocate who was lying in bed in his house with a fractured elbow, and two others who were away from Dharwar according to the police diaries. One of them had to be discharged even before trial! Three of the accused had actually bullet wounds, one in the jaw. It happened that those who were most active in the Congress and Khilafat Committees had been rounded up as if to hold meetings at leisure and plan for the future! The charges of arson, looting and attempt to murder were laid at the door of all the accused including me.

This incident evoked the sympathies of the whole of India as it was obviously a cooked-up case. The trial went on for more than three months. We were advised not to offer defence. We were satisfied with filing statements. I was one of the four who were acquitted, but the police had a warrant waiting against me and I was convicted three months later for seditious speeches under the preventive section 108 of the Criminal Procedure Code. I was also hauled up under the prince of sections, 124-A, simultaneously for a powerful article in the *Karmaveer*. But the Government had no evidence. I am told the very officer who "thirsted for my blood" and who had continued as District Magistrate remarked that Diwakar would speak the truth and own the article. But unfortunately for the Government, I had not penned the article and I had to say so. The judge had no other go but to acquit me under that section.

I may now close this article after referring to Gandhi's own approach to this movement and its sequel. When he visited Karnataka, the top leader of the non-Brahmin movement was closeted with him for some time. Gandhi listened to him patiently and told him that irrespective of local grievances and animosities, every Indian ought to join the fight for swaraj. On the eve of the Ahmedabad Congress in December 1921 I had occasion to meet him in Sabarmati at a prayer meeting. A telegram from Calcutta arrived and it conveyed to him that Chittaranjan Das was arrested under the new ordinance against volunteer organisations. He seemed to be overjoyed and sent a congratulatory telegram to Srimati Das

Gandhi was already thinking of taking up the challenge and enrolling fifty thousand volunteers. Speaking on that resolution in the Congress, he said that the British authority was enthroned on arrogance and our unarmed soldiers must be ready to face British bayonets with bare breasts!

In Yeravda jail, when all the politicals were placed in the European yard for a day, we told him how angry people were for his suspension of the Bardoli campaign of total non-cooperation and civil disobedience, on the plea that there was violence in Chauri Chaura. He quietly explained to us that, if he had not done what he did, the whole movement would have gone on wrong lines and gone beyond control. He confidently declared that what had been achieved in a single year of the movement would not have been possible by normal methods of agitation for thirty years. Without doubt, the seeds of future campaigns were really sown by the movement in 1921-22.

Recalling Memories of 1921

P R A B H U D A S G A N D H I

THESÉ MEMORIES do not belong to today. They belong to a dawn that broke half a century ago when the grave notes of

"Wake up, traveller, where is now the dark night?
He who sleeps loses, he who wakes succeeds"

resounded through the country. In the age of Lal-Bal-Pal new life was pulsating through entire India. The thundering speeches of Surendranath Banerjea and Pherozeshah Mehta broke India's slumber. India's land and sky had shivered at the sounding of the drums of vigilant guards like Dadabhai Naoroji, Romesh Chunder Dutt and Gokhaleji. The feeling that unless we got rid of foreign rule we would be worse than animals was growing stronger in the hearts of myriads of our countrymen. Everywhere the people were anxious about what they should do and how.

In this explosive situation, there occurred two unexpected and terrible events that served to kindle the gunpowder. One was the dastardly, brutal, demoniacal human sacrifice in Jallianwala Bagh and the other was the putting an end to the institution (or throne) of the Khalifa in Turkey by the intoxicated and blind power of the whites in a manner full of pride, which was a cruel blow to Muslims the world over. This event created great restlessness in the hearts of Indian Muslims. Simultaneously these two atrocities forged unity between all Hindus and Muslims. Both stood shoulder to shoulder and vowed on account of the Jallianwala Bagh and Khilafat atrocities to fight against the British Empire and to end its brutality and in no time the message of the agitation spread from this end of the country to that.

After due consideration, all people chose such an individual to fight the English who had shown a new way of fighting them. All of them decided collectively to follow that

path and made him their great leader. That individual was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

Gandhi's name began to be heard in every nook and corner of the country. His principle of non-violence was named *Gandhi ki Andhi* (Gandhi's whirlwind). Preparations for a non-violent fight were made from the biggest cities to the smallest hamlets. The war-drum of a just and peaceful revolt was sounded.

Unitedly, Hindus and Muslims all over the country welcomed enthusiastically the leadership of the Ali brothers along with that of Gandhiji. The country resounded with shouts of "Mahomed Ali Shaukat Ali ki Jai" along with those of "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai".

After his tours, Gandhiji would return to his Satya-graha Ashram at Sabarmati. When he was in the Ashram, the country's big personalities used to come to see him and take advice from their leader. The country's important decisions were taken in the Ashram itself.

The fast-increasing renown of the Ali brothers created an eagerness in my heart to see them from close quarters. I soon got an opportunity to see Mahomed Ali. He came to Ahmedabad and gave separate appointments to all Ashram inmates to meet and talk to him.

Maulana Mahomed Ali's name was more famous and hence it was naturally believed that he was the elder of the Ali brothers. But when Maulana Mahomed Ali himself told us that "Shaukat is older, bigger even otherwise, bigger in body and is even bigger in heart than me," there arose even greater respect for the elder Maulana in our hearts and our eagerness to meet him increased.

One morning I suddenly heard that Maulana Shaukat Ali was going to see Bapu that day. I reached Bapu's sitting-room five or seven minutes before the appointed time. In those days Bapuji used to stay in a cottage to the east of the weaving-shed. A building named "Hridaykunj" and in it a biggish room for Bapuji were not then in existence. Bapuji's room was barely two charpoys long and half as wide.

Before taking his seat, the Maulana saluted Bapuji bending down a good deal and smilingly remarked that he could put Bapu into his pocket but because they had made him their leader, he had to bow before him. Welcoming the Mau-

lana, Bapuji burst into hilarious laughter. I cannot for the life of me forget that emotion-charged spectacle when a big-bodied man bent before a small weak-bodied person. The Maulana Sahib sat before Bapuji with great respect and humility. On his face was visible feeling of respect, humour and enthusiasm along with childlike simplicity. He appeared even taller and broader because of his tall cap and the crescent and stars pinned thereon.

For some moments I did not understand whether I should move away from there when two big persons would be talking in private. Even then I stood glued to the door of Bapu's room. None made a sign to me to move off from there.

As a matter of fact, that was my very first chance of listening carefully to Urdu language but I did not experience much difficulty in understanding Shaukat Ali Sahib's Urdu.

As far as I remember, Maulana Shaukat Ali spent three-quarters of an hour with Bapuji that day. The Maulana Sahib made an honest attempt to get at the bottom of all the facets of the movement one after another. How far every item of programme indicated by Bapuji would be useful and what hopes may be held out to people about it—all this the Maulana Sahib wanted to know from Bapuji. The Maulana was pleased at what Bapuji told him with an open heart. The programme they were talking about was this:

They had to return the titles given by the British Government, to boycott foreign cloth, to ply the spinning-wheel in every home, to make and wear khadi, to get the Hindus to end untouchability, to give up opium, liquor, *ganja*, etc., and to create a feeling of brotherliness between Hindus and Muslims. There was talk about stopping cow-slaughter too but the proposal was that this ban may not be enforced by force. On their part, the Muslims themselves should stop cow-slaughter with a view not to injuring the feelings of the Hindus. For the purpose of achieving Hindu-Muslim brotherliness no compulsory restrictions may be placed on cow-slaughter. The Hindus also, taking into consideration the feelings of their Muslim brethren, should join the Muslims and fight with the British Government for the Khilafat, staking their lives. Lawyers should give up going to Government courts altogether. The Maulana Sahib seconded all these points heartily and most enthusiastically in strong words. But when the question of asking students to leave Government schools and colleges came up, the Maulana openly opposed it

and said that if that was done, their whole lives would be ruined, that if their young men did not study, did not take higher education, how would the country rise high? The condition of the boycott of schools and colleges would have to be removed. He did not at all agree with Mahatmaji on this point.

The feeling of dark opposition was visible on the lines on the Maulana's face. Bapuji's face wore a look of deep anxiety. After a few moments of deep thought, Bapuji regained his normal composure. Eagerness to convince the Maulana shone forth on his face. He said: "See, I too desire that our boys and girls should study. They must moreover study well. Your point that if they study the country will rise is correct. But what is the use of education that promotes slavery? The youth of our country will be able to study even after there is freedom.

"When a country is attacked, every boy of a free country goes to the front. When war with Germany broke out, I saw in England that professors and students of big universities gave up teaching and studies and jumped into the fray. The primary question that faced them was to safeguard their country's freedom. Their own studies came only after that.

"The studies that are going on in schools and colleges today are meant to produce slaves. I wish to feed milk to my child. But when I come to know that the milk in the bowl which I hold in my hand has some poison mixed in it. I shall not allow that bowl even to touch my child's lips. Why, will you go on giving the poison of slavery to the country's boys and girls? This education is one that is pushing our country day by day into greater slavery.

"Once the country becomes free, then we may ensure that all over the country there is best education. We have to wrest swaraj in a year. If our boys and girls suspend their studies for a year, they will lose nothing. On account of having participated in the freedom struggle, their strength will increase as also their power of understanding. That students leave schools and colleges is more important than that lawyers and magistrates desert law courts and big people relinquish their titles. This aspect cannot be given up, it is extremely important."

There was no excitement in Bapuji's voice. He said the bitterest thing with utmost tenderness. Bapuji's telling

arguments completely won over the mountainlike Maulana. Bowing before Bapuji, he said: "Respected Sir, I honour and accept your word. It is our duty to obey you."

When Bapuji did not object to my presence there during his talks, I thought that due to paternal love towards me he gave me a chance to listen to the words of great personalities like the Maulana Sahib.

Bapu was dead against sending his children to Government schools and colleges. It was also intolerable to him that his children should not receive education. He was running a small school to teach the 10 or 20 children living in his neighbourhood. It was named the National School of the Satyagraha Ashram.

There was one principle in our National School because of which it would perhaps be wrong to call it a vidyalaya. Pupils had complete freedom to work on their own. They would go to the extent of saying to their teachers, "You are wasting our time; please do not teach us." Indeed, such was the effect of Bapuji's influence that without disregarding in the least humility, courtesy or modesty, we the students were able to enjoy enough freedom from discipline. Nevertheless, we were not in any way adamant or indisciplined. In our school, the tiniest boy could pass on his comments to Bapu on the conduct and behaviour of the most learned teacher and could freely decline to obey even Bapuji's orders. Just as a teacher could approach Bapuji on some grave question of principle, so too could any pupil of the National School go to Bapuji about his own ordinary problems without let or hindrance.

About three or four weeks after the Maulana Shaukat Ali-Bapu meeting, I went to Bapuji one morning with some problem of the Students' Association of our National School. Interrupting his work, he heard me and gave us the needed guidance. I was not at all willing to hear what he said to me: "I wish that all of you suspend your studies and join the task of winning swaraj. The education of small children may well continue but the bigger boys and girls of the National School should stop attending classes and ply the spinning-wheel for eight hours every day. We have to win swaraj in nine months. After that you may recommence your studies."

Hearing these words of Bapuji, I just remained staring

at him. There was agitation in my mind. On the one hand, Bapuji did not send us to schools and colleges to study and on the other he asked us to stop even our own studies. I felt he was wholly unjust in this but at the same time another difficulty arose in my mind. Right from the beginning, priority was accorded to work over studies in our National School. Every day every student had to do Ashram chores for one-and-a-half to two hours and in addition agricultural work or weaving for three or four hours. How can the work of swaraj be done on a slow-plying spinning-wheel? This question shot through me with the speed of electricity. Bapuji read the expression on my face and before I could say anything, he began to explain: "When I am going to tell the students of the entire country to stop their studies, I must first stop the studies of my own children. If there is possibly no swaraj after nine months, you may start your studies again. But I want to tell you that if possibly swaraj does not materialise, then even at that time do not study English. The young men of our country waste such a lot of time learning a foreign language. By thus wasting the valuable time which is the time of working in one's life, great harm has been caused to the country." But I could not appreciate what he said. Bapu again found time to explain his position to me. Having summoned all students of the National School, he spent some hours with them and, describing India's slavery and the sad plight of villagers, he prepared us for service of the country and finally he got from us an undertaking to ply the spinning-wheel for eight hours every day.

In spite of being immersed in Bapuji's countrywide programme, revered Mahadev bhai Desai would spare daily one-and-a-half to two hours to do spinning in the company of boys and girls and ask them to sing community songs. A great sage learned in the Vedas, Vinoba Bhave, holding his silence, would sit down and spin continuously for full eight hours. His devotional songs would spread joy in his long room with low tiled roof.

When we presented to Mother Kasturba a pure white sari woven by our own hands out of yarn spun in our Ashram, our joy was no less than that over a victory won in war.

Before much time had elapsed, Bapuji again took me a step further. He had already begun the new rule of maintaining silence for 24 hours every Monday. One Monday I

went to Bapuji on some business. Along with his answer on that point, Bapuji had written on a small piece of paper: "The student who is ready should see Mama (Vitthal Lakshman Phadke). Mama, who teaches scavengers' children at the Anstyaj Ashram there, needs someone's help."

* I placed that chit before the Students' Association. It was a question of going far away from Ahmedabad to another district and staying with the scavengers' children all the 24 hours. Kakasaheb Kalekar said: "How can we leave the work here and go?" Kishorelalbhai observed: "Bapuji has in this way thought of preparing the students. By staying for three months in turn with Mamasahab and serving the scavengers, your capacity (for service) will increase."

I said we all were almost uneducated. Kakasaheb said, "Those scavenger-boys do not even know how to count from one to ten. You are able to count up to a hundred, is it not so? Well, even if you teach them how to count numbers, Mama will get help."

When after a prolonged talk no one was ready to go alone, throwing aside all reserve I stood up in that assembly and said that if I were sent I was ready to go to Mama. As soon as the meeting was over, I conveyed this to my parents who blessed me and gave their consent. Then I went to Bapuji and informed him that for the first three months I was ready to go to Mamasahab. I was sent there forthwith.

The period of nine months in which swaraj was to be won was running out swiftly. The agitation for swaraj was progressively taking on the form of a hurricane. Thousands of students from Ahmedabad to Calcutta had deserted schools and colleges with the intention of winning swaraj and the problem of continuing the education of brilliant students who had come out of schools and colleges faced the country's leaders. At the suggestion of the latter, Bapuji supported the organisation of national vidyapiths. Thereafter, a number of vidyapiths were opened.

The Mahavidyalaya of the Gujarat Vidyapith was launched in a bungalow on the banks of the Sabarmati, three km off Satyagraha Ashram. My heart began to dance as I would now study in this vidyalaya. But Bapuji summoned me and said to me: "I do not desire that you should go to the Gujarat Vidyapith in order to become a snatak (graduate). You should give your time to serving villages and for khadi work for

the sake of swaraj. The Gujarat Vidyapith has been opened for those students who have come out of schools and colleges and left their studies. We in the Ashram ought to devote our maximum time to work for swaraj. It is not proper that we should remain buried in books."

My experience of working in the scavenger quarter had shocked me. I shivered inwardly out of fear. Perpetual filth, abuses of drunkards, the uncultured life of families living in ramshackle huts—the evil effect of all these could push me lower than the level of even an ordinary man. This fear unnerved me.

I told Bapu of my inward fear. In a moment, he made arrangements to save me from it. He said: "Even after doing your work well and thoroughly you have fear of pollution, it is proper that that work should be stopped." And he immediately sent me back to Satyagraha Ashram. I once again began to do weaving on the looms. But the restlessness of my mind went on increasing. I became all the more painfully aware of my utter incapacity for any kind of social or national service. I was frightened inwardly so much that I began to see darkness all around me. One day without prior permission I left the Ashram and set out to go and meet Bapuji wherever he may be in the course of his tour.

Bapuji had at that time halted in Bombay in connection with the conduct of the agitation for swaraj. Reaching there, I touched his feet. Blessing me, he eyed me closely. I could utter only a few words: "My mind is confused; I have come to you." Big leaders and workers used to be with him in turns. There was this crowd for two or three days. Bapu got no time even to talk to me.

In those days, Swami Anand used to stay with Bapuji. He was put in charge of the publication from Ahmedabad of two weeklies, *Navajivan* and *Young India*. In this connection Swamiji used to have frank talks with Bapu. Like Mahadev bhai, Swami also could sometimes place his point of view before Bapu with importunity. Seeing my listless and dull condition, Swamiji had a talk with me. I flatly told him, "I shall not return to the Ashram, I am not fit for it. I don't have the competence to render 'national service.'" Swami interceded. He pressed Bapu to maintain with him a day-and-night servant for his personal work. It was Bapuji's strict rule not to engage any servant with him for his personal work. Even then at Swami's insistence, Bapuji was pleased

to accept my services, not as a servant, but as his own child. I was with Bapu during his tour in the country. The tour lasted nearly three months. We had camped in Aligarh, Moradabad, Kanpur, Allahabad and in many such towns. Excepting Mondays, every day about five or six meetings were held at which Bapu delivered his powerful speeches without a loudspeaker. In addition to these, there used to be two or three workers' meetings which lasted longer. Bapu could not sleep for more than three or four hours during the night and in the daytime he did not get even a little time in which to relax himself. When the pressure of work increased a lot, he used to effect a cut even in his diet of milk and fruits that day.

In the course of his tour of India, Bapu's main item of work was the bonfire of foreign cloth. While in transit, meetings lasting two to four minutes used to be held at intermediate stations. During this time he was able to persuade hundreds of persons to remove at least the piece of foreign cloth on their heads. Even before the train left the station, the heap of caps, turbans, *dupattas*, etc., made of foreign cloth that formed on the platform was set on fire. We would see the rising flames from the moving train.

After Uttar Pradesh, we proceeded to Bihar, Bengal, Assam, Utkal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and then once again back to Bombay. As a result of this, I had the good fortune to profit most from Bapu's close company and be familiar with the country's many intractable problems.

In some places, there used to be separate meetings of youths and students. In big towns, these used to be held even in mosques and the Maulana and Bapu gave their speeches from the same dais. On the extensive grounds of cities, Bapu used to ignite, in some places amidst shouts of victory, tall hillock-like heaps of foreign cloth.

The period of one year in which swaraj was to be won was running out and the eagerness to wrest freedom increased just like the full moon tide in the sea. The terrible pressure of this whole movement weighed very heavily on Bapu's mind.

Reducing his diet, he had limited it to 20 dried grapes, a bowl of milk and one or two oranges. If this reduced diet was to be cut down further, what was to be cut out from it? Even then, a new idea struck Banaji in order to lighten his mental worries and that was to effect a radical change in his dress.

A huge meeting of students and youths was held in the famous town of Madurai in Tamil Nadu. There in his speech Bapuji emphasised the point that all students should take a vow to wear hand-spun, hand-woven khadi. Every young man and woman ought to make this much sacrifice for the sake of serving the country. Someone among the students raised an objection to khadi. He had said it was very costly.

Hearing that khadi was thick, heavy, rough, required more labour to wash, the expense on soap in washing it was heavy, it was ugly, Bapu would smile and in reply, through various kinds of humorous anecdotes, would persuade them to bear the burden of thicker clothes for the well-being of the country. They should regard the extra labour involved in washing it as national service. But when people criticised the expensiveness of khadi, the natural expression of pleasure on his face would change to dejection. This was so because to say that khadi was expensive was to deal a cruel blow to its principal aim. To provide succour to the poor and the needy was certainly the utmost uniqueness of khadi.

On return from that students' meeting, Bapu was as sad as if he had seen some dear one on his death-bed. He said to the youths at the meeting in reply: "If you find khadi dear, wear fewer clothes. Wear simple clothes and make ends meet." But Bapu knew that listeners accepted such wordy answers very little. He realised that he must give some solid answer to it. Upon return home from the meeting, while going for a bath, Bapu said to me, "Das Babu (C. R. Das) had presented to me in Calcutta a piece of khadi; fish it out and keep it handy. It is to be measured." Seeing the length of the piece, he said to me: "Make this into two' pieces and place one in the bath-room. Now I must wear only a loin-cloth. Collect my dhoti and kurta and tie them up carefully in my bedding. The students say khadi is dear. Then one can do with fewer clothes. They will have to be taught this."

I was taken aback. Mechanically I fetched Bapuji's dhoti and kurta from the bath-room and placed a piece of thick unwashed khadi of very small width near the towel there. When Bapu came out after bath, he was in a very happy mood. He said to me: "I have worn the loin-cloth properly. Now this will do. Later, I shall think out a plan to cut this further and make it smaller."

That same day, Bapu wrote and sent an article, "My Loin-cloth", to *Navajivan*. By consulting others, I got some more information about that meeting in Madurai. I learned that Bapuji had become very deeply hurt seeing that the people of Madurai had no faith in khadi.

The programme of making bonfires of foreign clothes now went on slowing down. In place of "Burn cloth", the message of "Make cloth" went on spreading progressively through Bapu's mouth day by day.

At one place the students asked Bapu what they the youths should do. Bapu replied: "Whatever work comes before you, do it thoroughly. You see this youthful Prabhudas who is with me. Just as he is working, apply your time to the work that comes your way. Therein lies the beauty of youth."

Then when one day more was left for reaching Bombay and the period of stay with Bapu was about to be over, I requested him to let me stay on with him. Bapu said in reply: "If you are keen on staying with me, go among the untouchables who do the work of weaving. Learn from them how to starch the hand-spun raw yarn. When you are able to starch twisted yarn, know that I am near you only. If I could only help it, I would leave this lecturing and agitation and go amongst the weavers and start the work of weaving. But India's condition today is such that I have to take all this trouble. As I cannot go amongst the untouchables, I desire that you do so in my place. Your staying among them is like my staying among them."

The third day had not even been completed in Bombay, when Bapu called me and said, "Now go to the Ashram and make your future programme there."

I said, "I wish to stay on here till the Working Committee meeting. I shall go away after having a glimpse of the big leaders." Bapu said in a stern voice: "Do not waste time thus. You have nothing to do with the Working Committee."

Having arrived at the Ashram, I did not halt there. Those words of Bapu kept on lingering in my mind—"When you go among the weavers and start working there, know that I am with you only." I began to do weaving with the weavers for six hours a day.

Non-cooperation

SURENDRA MOHAN GHOSE

I T WAS 1920. Some of us who had been to jail during World War I as Regulation III Prisoners had been released. I met one of the leaders of Bengal from Dacca, Srish Chandra Chatterjee, veteran leader of the extremist wing of the Congress led by Tilak, Byomkesh Chakraborty, C. R. Das, Lajpat Rai and others. Srish Babu made me a delegate to the special session of the Congress in Calcutta, and I attended.

In those days, it was not merely non-cooperation, but non-cooperation with Khilafat. In the Congress session, along with Mahatma Gandhi, there were the Ali brothers, Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali. Jinnah, Pandit Motilal Nehru and many other leaders of all-India fame also were present. Lala Lajpat Rai presided over the session. There was opposition from C. R. Das to one item of the non-cooperation programme, boycott of councils.

Gandhiji's programme was to boycott the council elections being held the same year. C. R. Das, while endorsing the programme as a whole, objected to this item. His idea was that we must enter these councils and non-cooperate from within, to wreck the Diarchy Constitution. Otherwise, the British Government would create cleavage and split us through the instrument of Government power—what little there was—and by distributing patronage to those who would work against us. However, Gandhiji's programme was carried out by an overwhelming majority, with an unprecedented mass upsurge.

From jail we had watched the political movement outside and the course of events in Europe—Germany's defeat, the Russian Revolution, anarchical conditions in Italy and many other parts of Europe. Also, because our own attempt for an armed uprising, with the help of the Indian army, had failed, for the time being, we were thinking, what next?

The great Abinash Chakraborty, one of Sri Aurobindo's

important supporters, was also a Regulation III prisoner. I had the good fortune to be with him, first in one of the 100 cells of Midnapur jail and then again in Hazaribagh Central Jail. Abinash Babu used to tell me about Gandhiji's movement as one which had been predicted by Sri Aurobindo in his last letter to his countrymen before leaving the political scene. This, we felt, was going to sweep the country! Mixing with other State prisoners and some political prisoners, mainly from the Punjab, we were discussing our future plan. The consensus was that if we were released, we would also have to join the Congress and plunge into the movement, to work among the masses, the people of our motherland.

How we viewed the development in those days is still fresh in my memory. Gandhiji was a believer in the British Empire. He condemned us in a meeting organised by Sir P. C. Lyon, I.C.S., when World War I started. Tilak wanted to help the British in their war efforts on condition that Home Rule was first granted or at least promised. But Gandhiji said that in this hour of their greatest difficulty, we should help them unconditionally. Gandhiji went ahead on his own lines, and practically endangered his life working very hard to help the British to recruit people for the army.

But at the end of the war, the British came out with the Rowlatt Act for dealing with the revolutionaries. Then suddenly Gandhiji was awakened and was determined to resist that "lawless law", as it was termed by the leaders, with general mass backing "satyagraha", as he called it. Protest meetings were held all over the country, and at Amritsar it ended with the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. The fire was kindled! Gandhiji called the British Government a "satanic Government".

There was another fire brewing in the minds of the Muslims in general and some political thinkers in particular. That was the dismemberment of Turkey which finally led to disowning the Khilafat by the Young Turks under the leadership of Kemal Pasha. This was done by the British as part of their Empire safety policy. Maulana Mahomed Ali and his brother, Maulana Shaukat Ali, as leaders of Muslims, took up the challenge of the British and joined Gandhiji in his non-violent non-cooperation movement. That is how the whole movement got its name, "non-cooperation and Khilafat".

After our release, some of our friends took the initiative to hold a conference of political sufferers, along with the special

session of the Congress. Ramesh Acharya, a veteran revolutionary leader of those days, took a prominent part in it, with other friends from the Punjab and Bengal. What was intended was mainly to demand the release of all other political prisoners from jail and in the Andamans. Lala Lajpat Rai agreed to preside over this conference.

Purna Das, another veteran revolutionary from Bengal, and I were asked to approach Gandhiji. He was sitting with the Ali brothers and some other people. He declined straightaway, saying, "I am preparing the country to send people to jail and you have come to ask that they be released. No I shall not associate with this move." But then he asked us, "Who is the leader of Bengal, can you tell me?" We said, "C. R. Das." He was a bit surprised and said: "Not A. Chaudhury?" (A. Chaudhury was the Chairman of the Reception Committee, as I remember.) We said, "No, if C. R. Das is with you, the whole of Bengal will be with you." We were very much impressed with that first meeting with Gandhiji; it remained in our minds enshrined for ever.

I now come back to non-cooperation. After the special session, C. R. Das and others who had already filed their nomination papers to fight the elections withdrew them. In Bengal they were working in the name of the Jana Sabha; Satyendra Chandra Mitra, another great revolutionary leader from Bengal, joined this movement heart and soul, with another barrister, I. B. Sen. All worked under C. R. Das's leadership although B. Chakraborty was the leader of the party. This Jana Sabha had its branches in every district. There were no such branches of the Congress. In my district also they were working in the name of the Jana Sabha, with a small office in the town of Mymensingh.

In consultation with our party leaders, I decided to stay on in Calcutta. Hari Kumar Chakraborty, famous revolutionary leader, Naresh Chaudhury and some others started work in Calcutta. Suddenly, before the annual session of the Congress in Nagpur, I received a telegram from our boys in Mymensingh to go there immediately. In Calcutta all preparations were afoot to go to Nagpur. Many of our friends were going, but nevertheless I had to go to Mymensingh, the largest district of Bengal in British India, both in area and in population.

On arrival I found that the boys from schools and colleges had come out, lawyers had come out. The district

leaders, the late Bipin Behari Sen, Manmohan Neogi and Surya Sen had called a public meeting in the evening. I went to the meeting and was listening from a corner. Suddenly I heard my name being called out by Manmohan Neogi who was speaking, asking me to come to the rostrum. I was introduced, and he announced that I would be in charge of organising the village committees and volunteers, etc., in the office of the Jana Sabha. From the next day I took charge of the work. Kshitish Bose of our party was in charge of volunteers. I was looking after the work of organising the village committees all over the district.

Khilafat workers also started working in close collaboration with us. After Nagpur, the Congress constitution was adopted by us and the name was changed from Jana Sabha to Congress Committee. C. R. Das went to Nagpur with a large contingent from Bengal, including most of our leading party members, to oppose the boycott of the councils. But he was told by Gandhiji that since council elections were over, they would come only after another five years and it was no use fighting over that issue then. C. R. Das saw the point, withdrew his opposition and accepted the programme as a whole.

In Bengal the floodgates were open. The cry was, "Bande Mataram! Allaho Akbar! Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai! Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das ki Jai! Swaraj, Khilafat, Golami Choro! Bilaiti Mal Hatao! Court mein Mat Jao! Apas mein Sab Tai Karo!" and so on. Also, "Charkha Chalao, Tant Chalao, Hindu-Muslim Bhai Bhai", etc. In the Congress office, old ladies, both Hindu and Muslim, were coming with old dilapidated charkhas in their hands to get them repaired.

In Mymensingh, on one occasion, in defiance of the District Magistrate's Section 144 order forbidding a public meeting, we held it just outside the Congress office, surrounded by armed police, with Anath Gopal Sen and Ajit Ghosh, non-cooperating lawyers, a sadhu, and others addressing the crowd, one by one, and being taken off to jail. Such was the spirit of the time that all this was reported fully in the Calcutta Press.

In Netrakona, one of the sub-divisions of the district, a local sadhu, Bharat Brahmachari, had an ashram and many disciples among lower and upper caste Hindus. Most of his prominent workers were members of our own revolutionary party who were evading arrest by changing their names and

becoming sadhus. One of them is now in Pondicherry with a new name given to him by Sri Aurobindo, "Yogananda". Bharat Brahmachari called his disciples "carpenters, tantis (weavers), etc.", and ordered them to make charkhas and tants (hand-operated looms) and started distributing these to his disciples for work. A training shed was started in the ashram, for which he received Rs 10,000 as help from the District Congress.

Prof Dhiren Dutta, Ph.D. (a Premchand Raichand scholar), also taking to the loin-cloth, was sent to Sabarmati for training in charkha and weaving. Upon his return a training centre was opened in the compound of the District Congress office. From a village-to-village household survey, we discovered that the amount of the average family's debt was practically the same as the annual amount spent on foreign cloth, a significant argument in favour of the charkha.

Things developed with lightning speed. Dr Bipin Behari Sen was the moving spirit, with hundreds of trained revolutionary workers behind him. One day news came from the police barracks that all the armed police, their subedars and havildars, had resigned and placed their arms and uniforms in front of the Superintendent of Police. Mr Lowman, D.I.G., I.B., C.I.D., came next day. Even after long persuasion, he did not succeed. Then he officially treated it as their "due leave" and told them to go home and return. All left, but their havildar, who was a Muslim of Bihar, and four or five others came to the Congress office and joined the movement. When the movement died down in 1922, we got them appointed in the Calcutta Corporation, of which C. R. Das was Mayor and Subhas Chief Executive Officer.

In 1921, after the Nagpur session, when the movement was gaining momentum, Deshbandhu C. R. Das visited Mymensingh twice. On his first visit he was served with a notice by the District Magistrate, asking him not to address any public meeting, etc. He did not leave the railway station. The whole town was ablaze when it heard the news. The railway station was full, a crowd of thousands and gradually the number was swelling. The Deshbandhu had to come out to pacify the crowd and to give it *darshan*. It was announced that peace was not to be disturbed because the Congress and Mahatma's order was not to defy the prohibitory order. Everybody should go back peacefully. Cries of "Bande Mataram! Allaho Akbar! Deshbandhu ki Jai!"

"Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai!" were raised by the enormous crowd and C. R. Das left Mymensingh.

As I recall, C. R. Das paid a second visit to collect funds for the Tilak Swaraj Fund. Rupees one crore was the target. Swaraj was promised within one year. A certain number of charkhas were also to be distributed among the people, so that they might ply them. Surya Sen, one of the district leaders with whom C. R. Das was putting up, took him round. The first house Surya Babu proposed to visit was that of one Rai Bahadur and practising lawyer. He had not renounced his title, nor had he given up his practice. C. R. Das told Surya Babu, "Why then do you want to solicit him? There are also crores and crores in the Government treasury!"

In the afternoon, Dr Bipin Behari Sen and I went to Surya Babu's house to meet C. R. Das. We were staggered to hear from him that he was leaving the same night because he could not collect any money except a small sum which was given to him by a few visitors. He told us, bursting with rage, that Brindaban Mandal, a merchant, although paying the highest income-tax in the district, had offered only Rs 10, which he had refused and come away. Then he went to Girish Chakraborty's swadeshi cloth shop; he offered him the same amount. That was why he was leaving. We pleaded with him to stay another day and asked him how much he would expect from a small town like Mymensingh, with a population of about 30,000 in those days. He said that Rs 10,000 would satisfy him. We promised that next morning before 10 a.m. the same would be collected. He need not go from house to house, but be seated in the office and the money would be collected on the spot. He agreed.

A lawyer, belonging to the Saha community, moneylenders and traders, a caste which had no social contact with the higher caste Hindus in those days, came and asked Deshbandhu why their community should pay when they were treated as untouchables in Hindu society. "Nobody will take water from us, nobody will dine with us," he complained. C. R. Das said, "But this is not one-sided only. Suppose I arrange a dinner of a hundred persons, fifty upper caste and fifty from your side for such a dinner." He said, "Then let us have it tomorrow." Deshbandhu asked us to be ready with fifty such people, but added, "I know he will not succeed." Next day, before we went for collection, that gentleman came and confessed that he had failed. They

said they could not join such a dinner because their fourteen generations would go to hell! Later, Deshbandhu was seated in a jute merchant's office. All of us gathered there and a sum of Rs 13,000 was collected on the spot before 10 a.m.

Then came the call for enlisting volunteers. Forms were printed. Leaders, workers and the masses were filling up the forms. Cart-loads of signed forms were coming to the Congress office. Leaders' names were being published in the papers. This was declared by the British as illegal. Suddenly, Congress offices were searched and these bundles were taken away by the police. Then they started arresting the leaders. Arrests were going on daily for picketing also.

The jail was full. We learnt from the papers that C. R. Das had been arrested, because his name was found in the volunteers' list. Among our district leaders, Chand Mian, a Muslim zamindar of Kerotia in Mymensingh, Manmohan Neogi, Amar Chakraborty of Netrakona, Amarendra Nath Ghosh of Tangail, Chandra Kumar Biswas of Kishoreganj and many others, both Hindus and Muslims, were arrested and sentenced. There were also Nurul Amin and Abu Hussain Sarkar of Rangpur who became Chief Ministers in East Pakistan, Giassuddin Ahmed of Jamalpur, Mymensingh, who became a Minister in East Pakistan, Abdul Mansur, who became a Minister of Industries in the Central Government, Pakistan, Maulana Kari Azizur Rahman of Noakhali, Hemendra Kishore Acharya, Ananda Kishore Majumdar, Mohini Sarkar Roy, Kamini Mohan Ghose (my father), Motilal Purkayastha, Jnanendra Chandra Majumdar, Taibuddin Ahmed, Naresh Chandra Chaudhury of Bajitpur, Maulvi Abdul Hamid Deopuri, Maulvi Mujeebur Rahman Phulpuri, Maulvi Abdul Wahid, Bokai Naqavi, Sirish Chandra Dhar Gupta, Sudhendu Kumar Majumdar, Manoranjan Dhar, who became a Minister in East Pakistan, Benod Chakraborty, Dr Prafulla Bir, Prithwis Bose, Satish Thakur, Syamananda Sen, Kusha Roy and Nagendra Shekhar Chakraborty. I must pay my profound respects to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Maulana Akram Khan, two great leaders of India, both of whom were actually and actively associated with secret revolutionary activities before the non-co-operation movement began.

After C. R. Das's arrest and the arrest of Basanti Devi (subsequently released), the movement reached its peak. A

no-tax movement was resorted to in one of the Union Boards, Laotia, and was successful. In Bhairab, people's courts were set up with a registration office to register all documents of sale, purchase of land, etc. A jail was constructed with bamboo fencing and with regular guards, etc. Both civil and criminal cases were tried openly with lawyers on both sides.

Near Sivaganj, on a small river, merchants' boats used to ply, carrying paddy and other goods from Mymensingh to Dacca. No boat was allowed to pass from district to district without tax payment. Bank to bank a bamboo barricade was set up. No merchandise was allowed to move. Permission from the District Congress office had to be shown, then only would they be allowed to proceed. We made a special seal and permission form. Merchants agreed to pay us half a paisa per maund for rice and paddy. This was going on all over the district. We were offered money by some merchants which we collected on that account as late as 1928, after my release from Mandalay jail where I was a Regulation III Prisoner.

Now I come to the Ahmedabad Congress, which I attended as a member of the A.I.C.C. and delegate. From Mymensingh, a large number went. Motilal Purkayastha who is now almost on his death-bed in Mymensingh was with me. Dr Jadugopal Mukherjee, the leader of our revolutionary party, was also with us. Amar Bose of Calcutta, Simla Vyayam Samity, a member of our party, and another sanyasi who was known to Jaduda were also with us. Jaduda gave word to Gandhiji that for one year we would not indulge in any violence. That year was going to be over at Ahmedabad.

Jaduda had a private meeting with Gandhiji. At Ahmedabad, C. R. Das was to preside, but he was in jail. Hakim Ajmal Khan presided and Asaf Ali was translating his Urdu speech into English. For the first time I saw him, a fine bright young man with an impressive look. We persuaded Maulana Hasrat Mohani to move a resolution for complete independence in place of swaraj. It was defeated.

After the Congress Jaduda, Amar Bose and I went to see Gandhiji's organisation in Bardoli which was to start satyagraha. We also visited Anand taluka, Karamsad and a few other villages in Baroda State. We returned to Bengal and then suddenly came news of Chauri Chaura ! Gandhi-

ji suspended the movement, declaring that he had committed a Himalayan blunder.

C. R. Das called us to visit him in jail. He could see anybody he liked. In the office of the Superintendent of the Jail, we met him, J. M. Sengupta being with us. The Deshbandhu explained to us why this suspension move must be opposed tooth and nail in the A.I.C.C. at Delhi. We started, under J. M. Sengupta's leadership, for the A.I.C.C. meeting at Delhi. We opposed, but Malaviya supported Gandhi in a very persuasive speech. We were defeated. Thus the curtain was drawn over non-cooperation.

First Phase

P. C. G H O S H

A RESOLUTION on progressive non-cooperation sponsored by Mahatmaji was passed at a special session of the Congress in Calcutta in September 1920. I was then a Government of India officer. A friend of mine connected with the organisation of the Congress gave me a distinguished visitor's card and I attended the Congress session only for some time one day. The resolution on non-cooperation was for the purpose of redressing the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs and attainment of swaraj. The programme comprised surrender of titles, withdrawal from schools, colleges, law courts, legislative councils, boycott of foreign goods, even non-payment of taxes. Although the resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority, about two-thirds of the delegates voting for it, the final decision was postponed till the Nagpur session of the Congress to be held in the last week of December 1920. Both sides, supporters and opponents of the resolution, began to carry on propaganda throughout the country. Mahatmaji went to Dacca in 1920 where in his speech he said : "You say 'God save the King, long live our gracious King' but what does it mean ? It does not mean the person of the King. It means the continuation of the British Empire. But it has been my prayer day and night to purify this Empire or strike. I have nothing to say if George as an Englishman lives long." We were very much impressed by this speech.

From Dacca he came to Calcutta on his way to Nagpur. I arranged an interview with him in Calcutta through a young worker in his camp known to us. The interview lasted for about 45 minutes. Maulana Mahomed Ali was present most of the time. Mahadev bhai Desai was present all the time. As a result of this interview I realised that non-violence was not a cloak for cowardice. I felt that non-violence would be coupled with bravery. I realised also that Gandhiji was inspired by a lofty ideal. Though I did not be-

lieve in the attainment of swaraj within one year, still I thought this movement would certainly advance the country towards freedom.

At Nagpur the non-cooperation resolution was passed unanimously. All the stalwarts of the Congress who opposed it in Calcutta supported the resolution. In fact, it was proposed by Chittaranjan Das and Lala Lajpat Rai seconded it. Both of them were doubtful about the practicability of the resolution in Calcutta, and so opposed it. It stirred the imagination of the people throughout India. Most of us joined the movement. Many prominent lawyers like Chittaranjan Das, Motilal Nehru, Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhbhai Patel gave up their practice. It gave a further stimulus to the movement. Das had a very lucrative practice at the bar. For the princely sacrifice he was given the title "Deshbandhu". Shyamsundar Chakraborty, an associate of Sri Aurobindo, also joined the movement. A very large number of students joined the movement. National Universities were formed in many parts of India—Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat, Bombay, U.P. and Delhi. Some of the students became life-long fighters for Indian freedom. They can be the pride of any nation in the world. But, unfortunately, the country did not pay sufficient attention to their physical needs. They could show much better results if that was done. At Nagpur the Congress creed was changed to attainment of swaraj by peaceful and legitimate means and the Congress constitution was completely changed. Everyone of the age of twenty-one or above subscribing to the creed, whether literate or illiterate, and paying four annas annually, could be a member. For the first time a franchise basis was established for Congress delegates. The highest executive—the Working Committee—was to regulate the day-to-day activities of the Congress. Congress committees were also formed in the villages for the first time.

Mahatmaji came to Calcutta for opening the National University. In his speech there he said: "I have never been weighed down with so much fear and anxiety as I am today." He saw more of emotion than of reason among the students. Apparently, there was an atmosphere of Hindu-Muslim unity. Hindu and Musalman volunteers also shouted "Vande Mataram", all shouted "Vande Mataram" and "Allaho Akbar".

The next important step left was taken at an A.I.C.C. meeting, at Bezwada, on March 31 and April 1, 1921. It is known as the Bezwada programme. The programme consisted of enrolment of one crore members and collection of one crore of rupees for introduction of twenty lakhs of spinning-wheels. One crore of rupees was collected, twenty lakhs of charkhas were introduced, but one crore members were not enrolled, because membership enrolment was a difficult process. In the villages people knew nothing about political ideas. They were absolutely ignorant. I have even seen this myself in some places while enrolling members. I asked a man of about fifty to enroll as a Congress member. He said, "I am a minor—ask my elder brother."

Then in July the Khilafat Committee passed a resolution asking the Musalmans not to be in the army. The Government considered it to be tampering with the loyalty of the soldiers and arrested the Khilafat Committee members and the Maulanas who also issued a *fatwa* in its favour. Then when Mahatmaji knew why this had taken place, he immediately convened a meeting of important members, not merely the Working Committee, but also others. It passed a resolution reiterating the Karachi resolution and asked all important members throughout India and members of the A.I.C.C. to reiterate the resolution in a public meeting. And the most important thing was the November resolution. In the November resolution there was a plan for individual and mass civil disobedience. But every volunteer was to take a pledge. The first sentence was: "I promise, I swear in the name of God." Many people objected to the words "I swear in the name of God"; but neither Mahatmaji who supported the resolution nor Deshbandhu Das who seconded it agreed to change it. They all believed a non-violent man's strength was faith in God and not merely that they were to take a pledge that they believe in Hindu-Muslim unity. If a Hindu, "I shall not observe untouchability. And I believe in Hindu-Muslim unity and I also know spinning and I do spin every day." This is because Mahatmaji wanted not merely a change of masters but economic independence and social progress; not merely political freedom but political, economic and social freedom for all.

Then the British Government thought of bringing the

Prince, because its idea was that the proverbial loyalty of the Indians would come into play and the Prince would be welcomed everywhere; whereas the Congress Working Committee had passed a resolution asking the country to boycott the royal visit. And wherever the Prince went he saw a deserted city. The Government also passed laws and under them arrested the volunteers and declared the volunteer organisation illegal. Then Mahatmaji gave an ultimatum that satyagraha would be started on February 11, 1922 if the British Government did not concede the demand for swaraj. But the Viceroy's reply was given much before the 11th of February: "The Government is in no mood to concede that." And then Mahatmaji was preparing for action but on the 5th of February an unfortunate event known as the Chauri Chaura incident took place in which 21 policemen were burnt alive. The Congress and the Khilafat volunteers were responsible for it. Mahatmaji suspended the Bardoli satyagraha. Then the Government thought because there was some opposition to Gandhiji from Maharashtra to Bengal, that was the right moment for arresting him. But Mahatma Gandhi wrote in *Young India* : "If I am arrested, people should not take out any procession, no demonstration whatsoever, only they should remain peaceful and carry out the constructive programme."

His idea was that the constructive programme was in a sense swaraj. And Mahatmaji was arrested on the 10th of March for three articles in *Young India* and was sentenced to six years' rigorous imprisonment on the 18th of March, 1922 and with that ended the first phase of the non-cooperation movement.

When I Felt Like Rip Van Winkle

N. S. HARDIKER

“THE CHANGE in the spirit of the people is simply wonderful. You notice it every minute and on all sides. The most remarkable change is in the psychology of the man in the street. He seems to have been suddenly carried into political consciousness overnight. The younger generation is full of ambition and fire. The task of leaders will, for a time, consist in restraining it and using its enthusiasm for constructive purposes,” thus wrote Lala Lajpat Rai to me from Lahore to my New York address in his letter dated March 10, 1920. He added, “I would very much like you to return. There is great need and I am confident you would be able to contribute very substantially. I would love to have you as my assistant in charge of publicity work.” He, however, immediately corrected himself and said, “But I am afraid we cannot call you back unless the U.S. organisation has been placed on a secure footing.”

Soon after his arrival in India at the end of February 1920 after a spell of more than 60 months in England and America, Lalaji, the Lion of the Punjab, wrote the above letter to me to New York where I was working as Secretary General of the Indian Home Rule League of America and conducting the *Young India* monthly. Lalaji was moving fast in the country in order to understand the exact situation, meeting leaders and feeling the pulse of the people. He was helping Gandhiji in making the people realise their responsibility and urging them to stand erect and act boldly and courageously, even though they had to suffer at the hands of the ruling power. As days went by, the movement gained momentum and the leaders got themselves busy organising the masses. After the special session of the Congress held at Calcutta in the first week of September 1920, Lalaji got himself busy in getting the necessary manpower to push forward the non-cooperation movement that was launched. So, on November

11, 1920 Lalaji wrote to me again emphasising: "You and Rao should both return and take your part in the great struggle that is going on. This is the time for every Indian to be at home and be doing." He added, "The position is this: Gandhi just now is supreme in the country and he does not care for work abroad. His party is opposed to spending any money on foreign propaganda. The country is in the throes of a great struggle and it is difficult to spare either men or money."

As Lalaji was anxious for my immediate return, he requested N. C. Kelkar of the Indian Home Rule League in Poona to send me enough money to enable me to return home. A few months later, in November 1921, I came back. And what was there in sight for me? A change! The entire atmosphere in the country was changed! And how had this all happened? I felt like Rip Van Winkle, the hero of a tale by W. Irving, who slept 20 years and when he woke up he found himself in a world much different from the one before he slept. I had left the shores of my mother country in November 1913 and I stepped back on them again exactly eight years after, in November 1921.

At the time I had left India, the people were yet slumbering and were not fully awakened to the realities of the situation though, due to the partition of Bengal, the leaders of the country were much agitated and spared no pains to move their brethren to action. Bipin Chandra Pal and Surendra-nath Banerjea in Bengal, Lala Lajpat Rai in the Punjab, Tilak in the Province of Bombay, Chidambaram Pillai and others in Madras were on constant move in their own areas and elsewhere also in spite of the ruthless behaviour of the officials and the stringent policy of the Government. After my long stay in the U.S.A. I returned and saw the people up on their legs and actively working for the uplift of their mother country. I found them moving courageously with hand-spun, hand-woven white khaddar on their bodies and white caps on their heads, with national flags in their hands and with the slogan "Swarajya is my birthright and I will have it" on their lips. The people moved briskly from place to place unmindful of all the dust that entered their noses and mouths and settled on their white clothes on account of their treading

the unmetalled rough roads, advising their fellow countrymen not to help and co-operate with the ruling power in any way but to remain away from it in order to carry on their national activities very peacefully in a most non-violent manner. I thought that the people had become dare-devils not caring a bit for the threats, blows or whips of the police and the authorities who were behaving most rudely and inhumanly. What a wonderful change had been wrought! What an effective transformation of cowed down, weak, downtrodden, lifeless slaves! There was defiance on their faces. They were full of enthusiasm and buoyant spirit. They seemed to be ready to sacrifice everything they had and to suffer for the cause in order to achieve their goal.

How did this change come over the people? Whence came the spirit and whose was the magic wand that was used? When I saw the most astonishing transformation, there was no wonder that I felt like Rip Van Winkle who thought he was in a different world! But I was conscious that I was with my people whom I had left eight years ago. It was Gandhiji, who had caused the people to throw off their yoke and be free from the bondage of the British. The non-violent non-cooperation movement was started by him. It had caught the spirit of the people and had permeated amongst the masses who, by their activities, had changed the very look of the country. In clear terms Gandhiji had made the Indians understand what non-cooperation meant. "There could be no co-operation," Gandhiji had said, "between virtue and sin, between darkness and light; so, there can be none between the people and a Government opposed to their interests." By means of non-cooperation with the Government he was proving to the world that "even the most wicked policy could not survive, if the people did not tolerate it and refused to be a party to it".

Boys and girls, youngsters and elders, men and women were going about in batches singing in chorus the national song, "Vande Mataram", and other songs and swinging national flags in their hands urging the people to spin and use khaddar, to boycott foreign goods and to burn foreign cloth, to stop drinking liquor and to stand on their own feet boldly facing the wrath of evil-doers and be ready to suffer in the interest of Mother India.

It seemed to me that war was going on in India. Two forces were pitched against each other in order to get rid of the other. The bureaucracy which was ruling and which was armed to its teeth was opposing the newly awakened people of the land who were armed with soul force and were determined to carry on the fight for freedom to a finish. It was a sight for the gods to see. What of men like me who were anxious to see their country freed from the clutches of the British? I was indeed glad that I came back from the United States and got an opportunity to take part in the fight for freedom. I thanked Lalaji and Kelkar who paved my way to come and join the forces of liberation. It didn't take me long to throw myself headlong in the great movement and fight shoulder to shoulder with the thousands.

At the time of my arrival in India from the United States in November 1921, Lalaji sent a note to me through the *Kesari* office in Poona asking me to meet him at the time of the Congress Working Committee in Bombay in December. So I did. When the members had their recess I was taken to the chamber where the Committee was meeting. Lalaji was there. He welcomed me. Some of the members were standing chatting with one another with cups in their hands and some were sitting on chairs and sofas. Two or three of them were squatting on the floor near a desk intently listening to a smallish-looking, lean, half-clad, brown-coloured man with a glowing face which instantly caught the eyes of all. When I saw him, something from within me made me bend my head in reverence to him and I immediately said to myself, "Oh, this must be the Mahatma about whom we were reading so much in America and we were speaking to the American audiences in different centres of that land. It must be the man who had moved millions in India to action against a very powerful enemy who had become very anxious about his own existence and safety in the land which he had usurped." Thus I thought, and queried Lalaji. He nodded and slowly moved with me towards Gandhiji. As soon as we went near the desk and had stood in front of him, he looked at us. I folded my hands and bent my head. Then we sat near the desk. Gandhiji's eyes enquiringly questioned Lalaji about me. Lalaji introduced me to him and Gandhiji greeted me with a smile. He asked me about my arrival and said, "Lalaji has

already told me all about you and your work in America. I am glad you have come back. Now carry on your work here." So saying, he turned to those who were waiting there before us. As I got up I requested Gandhiji, "Will you give a message, sir, to our people in America? I am writing to my office there. They would love to have it." He looked at Lalaji and said, "Yes." Then we left him. Lalaji took me to the other leaders who were yet standing and discussing amongst themselves. I was introduced to them also. Within a few moments of that, the Committee resumed its sitting and I had to take Lalaji's permission to go.

When I met Lalaji the next day he gave me the message from Gandhiji and asked me to send it. The message read: "I would like you to tell the students in America that the best way in which they can serve the country there is to understand the non-violent character of the struggle. The violence which reigns supreme in the world today will only be conquered by non-violence, i.e., love. I would like the students also, when they write about the struggle, to be accurate about facts and figures which I often observe they are not."

As a delegate and member of the All India Congress Committee from Karnataka, I attended the 36th session of the Congress at Ahmedabad in December 1921. This was the second time in my life that I had seen a Congress session. Exactly 10 years before, in 1911, when I was yet a student of medicine in Calcutta I had seen the session held in that great metropolitan city and had worked there as a medical volunteer. Being a man of an inquisitive nature and of extreme nationalist temperament, I could gather the views and understand the minds of delegates and members whom I was serving there. It must be remembered that even at that time in 1911 the Congress leaders were yet sceptic of using words like "Swarajya" or "Swatantrya" which meant liberation from the clutches of the British. Possibly the fear of incurring the displeasure of the rulers was haunting the leaders and therefore they were very careful in the use of words in their resolutions. They had to weigh them before they used them in their writings or speeches.

Most of those who were present at the session as delegates and visitors seemed to me anglicised gentlemen.

They were all sitting on chairs fully clad in European style; hatted and booted, with collars and ties round their necks and trying to use the English tongue at every step. This was the scene that I had seen in 1911.

But in 1921, at Ahmedabad, it was altogether a different sight. Here there were no chairs to sit upon nor were the people seen in hats, pants and boots nor with ties hanging around their necks. Leaders, members, delegates, visitors and all had to squat on the floor which was covered with pure white hand-spun khaddar over a thick layer of dry grass. Naturally therefore each one who entered the pandal had to keep his or her shoes in a khaddar bag which was to be hung round one's own neck. The planner (Gandhiji himself) of all the arrangements of this session must have seriously and deeply thought over all the details and then announced them in papers. Everywhere in the pandal you could see simple decorations made out of khaddar, placards hung on poles, photographs of some historical scenes and personages and posters requesting the people to observe peace. In a Congress session which was partially led by men who had imbibed English ideas and were enamoured of their habits, customs, literature, etc., to sit on the floor in an Indian fashion watching the proceedings of the Congress was not only surprising but detesting also. It was altogether a distinct departure from the methods that were followed previously and therefore those like me who had seen or attended Congress sessions in the past were struck with the far-reaching ideas and imagination of the planner. Thousands were pouring into Ahmedabad to have the *darshan* of the Mahatma and to see what the Congress session looked like and what it meant to them. Arrangements for their temporary stay, rest, food, accommodation, etc., had to be made. Especially, they had to attend to the sanitation of the entire area where delegates and members of the Congress were to be lodged. For this purpose provision for urinals and latrines was made by digging special trenches and creating individual latrines with bamboo mats as cover on all sides and gunny cloth as doors. Dry earth was stocked near each trench with tiny spades for removing a little earth for depositing on the faecal matter in order to get rid of flies.

The entire area where a small township had risen looked

clean and appeared whitish as those who were moving about wore either white khaddar caps or white turbans and white shirts. The entire atmosphere in Ahmedabad was surcharged with patriotic fervour. All those who had come there looked to me as though they would be ready to jump into fire at the simple bidding of the Mahatma whom they adored.

As Lalaji had already remarked in one of his letters to me, Gandhiji was supreme in the country. It was quite evident that he loved the people and the people loved him. They obeyed him. They were ready to lay down their lives at his bidding. His word had become law to millions who were ready to make any sacrifice and suffer for the cause. The bureaucracy had started a ruthless campaign in order to cow down the people and, if possible, to crush them. The police and the other authorities used all kinds of tactics to win over the non-cooperators and when they failed in those attempts, used kicks, canes, whips and other weapons in order to break the morale of the people. When they found that they were not getting success even in these endeavours, they used to start arresting and throwing them into jails. During this movement in 1921 more than 25,000 people were arrested within a few weeks. They crowded the jails and without a murmur suffered at the hands of the jail authorities.

On March 10, 1922 Gandhiji was arrested in the Sabarmati Ashram. I was with him then. I noticed everything that went on at that time and also witnessed the court proceedings against him. He was convicted by an English judge who was far inferior to him. To us who sat in the court by his side witnessing the entire proceedings it seemed that Jesus of Nazareth himself was again being tried and convicted in this fashion. Gandhiji, knowing fully well that he would be taken away from his people for a long time and would be made to suffer loneliness, was all smiles. He didn't care what happened to him.

Along with us in the court there was Mrs Sarojini Naidu, the nightingale of India, also. After the conviction of Mahatma Gandhi, she wrote in one of the articles: "The strange trial proceeded and so I listened to the immortal words that flowed with prophetic fervour from the lips of my beloved master. My thoughts sped across the centuries to a different land and

different age, when a similar drama was enacted and another divine and gentle teacher was crucified, for spreading a kindred gospel with a kindred courage. I realised now that the lowly Jesus of Nazareth, cradled in a manger, furnished the only true parallel in history to this invincible apostle of Indian liberty who loved humanity with surpassing compassion and, to use his own beautiful phrase, 'approach the poor with the mind of the poor'."

Such was the wonderful metamorphosis that I saw in December 1921 just within a few weeks of my return to my mother country after an absence of eight long years in the U.S.A. All this was due to the non-cooperation movement which was launched by Mahatma Gandhi.

India Turns Rebellious

AJIT PRASAD JAIN

THE YEAR 1919 was fateful in the history of India as in that of the world. The allied powers had won the war and were preoccupied with re-drawing the map of Europe. They had talked of lofty ideals—making the world safe for peace and people's right to self-determination. When, however, it came to translating their ideals into action, the allies got bogged up in difficulties. Should Alsace-Lorraine be allowed to remain as part of Germany or be awarded to the French, who had suffered losses as no other allied nation had done? Some people were pressing for full reparations. President Woodrow Wilson had put forward the idea of the League of Nations, but the American Senate turned down the proposal for its membership. When the League met, America was not in it. Italy had returned disappointed from the Versailles peace talks and was sour. All round there was a sense of disillusionment.

The British Empire contained a large Muslim population, and after Turkey had joined the war on Germany's side, the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, assured the Muslims that their holy shrines would not be attacked and Turkey would not be deprived of the rich and predominantly Turkish land of Asia Minor and Thrace. The allies had, however, forgotten the war-time promises and both the British and the Americans wanted the "sick man of Europe", as the Western historians had nicknamed the Khalifa, to go out "bag and baggage" from European territory. The Czar had been secretly promised Constantinople by the allied powers, and if the Bolsheviks had not renounced the Treaty, Turkey could no more find a place on Europe's map. The Greeks and the Italians had also been lured into the war by generous promises of Turkish territory.

The negotiation table at Sevres thus turned into a but-

cher's slab for dismembering Turkey's limb. Lloyd George had himself shared the conviction that the return of Jews to Zion was divinely ordained. The Treaty provided that Palestine was to be the homeland of the Jews. The straits were to be neutralised and administered by an Allied Commission. Constantinople would be held as a hostage for the good behaviour of the Turks. If they misbehaved with the Greek, Armenian or Christian minorities, the Turks would be deprived of the city. Thrace was to be given to Greece and Anatolia to be divided among Greeks, Kurds, France and Italy. Meanwhile, the new force of Ataturk arose and the Sevres Treaty was not ratified.

India had shown unique loyalty towards the British during the war. Her contribution in men and materials was immense. On release from the Mandalay jail, Lokamanya Tilak renounced violence and opposition to the British Government. He was willing to do recruitment, if the Britishers agreed to give King's Commissions to Indians. Gandhiji, who then wore the Gujarati peasant's dress and not the Mahatma's loin-cloth, offered unconditional support and moved about exhorting people to join the army. He saw in recruitment the surest way to swaraj. A few dissenting voices, notably those of Mrs Besant, the Ali brothers and Maulana Azad, were silenced by internment or imprisonment.

My home district of Saharanpur was one-third Muslim, a stronghold of bearded *Maulvis* and *Ulama*. It hosted the world-famous theocratic seminary known as *Dar-ul-Ulum* at Deoband and the Arabic madarsa, *Mazhar-ul-Ulum*. The chief of the Deoband seminary, Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hasan, incurred the wrath of the Government and went to Hejaz, where he was reported to be conspiring against the British. Along with Maulana Mahmud was interned at Malta Maulana Husain Ahmad Madni, with whom I had the privilege of working later. But the district remained calm until the Hindu and Muslim loyalists held a public meeting in support of war effort. The meeting was presided over by Khan Bahadur Naim Khan, a leading zamindar. Some young lawyers came and when one of them moved an amendment to the official resolution asking for Home Rule, the galaxy of the loyalists left in a huff. The loyalist meeting was converted into a Home Rule gathering and Motilal, a young England-returned barrister

ter, was elected its chairman. The town again went into slumber till it was awakened by the thunder-shock of the Khilafat.

The annual session of the Provincial Congress was a matter of honour for any district headquarters. In 1917, the U.P. Congress session was held at Saharanpur. It was presided over by Dr M. N. Ohdedar, a top medical practitioner of Lucknow. The era of khadi had not yet dawned and Ohdedar was dressed meticulously in Western style. The dominating personality of the session was Gokaran Nath Misra, who had suspended his prosperous legal practice for six months. Later, Misra was elevated to the Bench of the Lucknow Chief Court. The chairman of the Reception Committee, B. R. Bomanji, a Parsi gentleman who had married a girl of the celebrated Anglo-Indian Powell family, threw the audience into roaring laughter by comparing Misra's oration with a donkey's labour. Bomanji was poor in Hindi and meant no insult. Among the promising young men were Jawaharlal, Khaliquz-Zaman and Harkaran Nath Misra. Jawaharlal had donned on the occasion a Lakhnavi *achkan* and *dupalli* cap made of finest foreign-made muslin. Introducing Jawaharlal to the audience, Bomanji said that he prayed to God to give him a son like Motilal's Jawahar. Jawaharlal spoke haltingly and created no impression. I was enlisted as a volunteer and was deputed to look after the personal comfort of the youthful trio. Thus began my camaraderie with Jawaharlal which lasted till his death.

My district was inhabited by vast numbers of what were in those days classified as the martial races—Rajputs, Gujars and Jats. It was made a field of intensive recruiting. A hunchbacked young man, short and clumsy, who had attracted the police's attention in a case, took to recruiting to escape prosecution. He used to get a small sum for every soldier enlisted. One afternoon as I was returning from school, I found him grappling with a hefty, well-built, tall villager, about twice his size, when two policemen swooped and whisked away the villager. The villager was never heard of later. The incident profoundly affected me and after more than fifty years, the villager's agonising looks, his wails and helplessness occasionally haunt me. This was not a solitary case of the kind. During the enquiry into the Punjab wrongs, it was established that forced recruitment and forced subscriptions were among the causes of mob fury.

The British rulers in India were following what might befittingly be described as a "carrot-and-stick" policy. The carrot was Secretary of State for India Montagu's announcement of August 1917, promising increasing association of Indians in the administration with a view to establishing, in due course, responsible government. The stick was the Rowlatt Report on sedition—a reminder of what was in store if the Indians misbehaved. There had, no doubt, grown up a well-spread violent revolutionary secret movement in pre-war Bengal, led by the young *bhadralok* (elite), which had cost the lives of many officials and policemen and had resulted in looting of property. But with the enactment of the Defence of India Act, which gave wide powers to the Executive, the movement was crushed. The returned-migrant Sikhs of the Gadar Party from California were also suppressed and the Punjab made safe for the British. Germany's efforts to create a resurrection with the help of the Muslims in the northwest and the revolutionary Bengalis in the east or to land arms had failed.

The Indian National Congress was the premier political organisation about three decades old. It had been guided before the outbreak of the war by some leading personalities of India—Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta. Its achievements were, however, meagre. India's elite, mostly lawyers, would congregate once a year in a holiday mood during the Christmas week and disperse after passing a few well-worded resolutions, to hibernate till the next session: that was the Congress. The proceedings started with swearing loyalty to His Majesty the King Emperor. The people were getting tired of the politics of petitions and deputations. The metamorphosed Congress, after its transfer from the hands of the Moderates to the Extremists and the casual entente with the Muslim League could not satisfy the people's urge either. They wanted something more effective: sanctions behind their demand. They, however, knew not what sanctions there could be.

Gandhiji's advent on India's national scene was an event of highest significance. He brought with him high credibility from South Africa. He was a champion of the weak, the fearless and the God-fearing. He taught his followers to shed fear, resist evil and suffer the consequences. Gandhiji had discovered the weapon of non-violent passive resistance which

could be handled alike by men and women, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant. Gandhiji was intensely religious; he knew what religion meant in the life of an average Indian. He religionised politics. Gandhiji was in no hurry to rush into the fray, and for over two years after his return from Africa, he had travelled extensively to know the Indian masses and how they would respond to him. Gandhiji was unparalleled in the technique of mass mobilisation and evolving touching programmes for them. He would sermonise less and teach the faithful more by practice. The satyagrahi proings in Champaran and Kheda had given Gandhiji confidence. Gandhiji was mystical, often his methods would not stand the test of reason. But he could invoke faith as no other man had done before.

Gandhiji did not have to wait for long when the Government threw out a challenge. He had hardly recovered from an illness, which might have proved deadly, when the Government announced its intention to enact two bills recommended by the Rowlatt Committee for suppressing seditious activities. The Defence of India Act would expire six months after the war and the Government was eager to rearm the executive with drastic powers, which they had wielded during the war. What could be borne under war conditions would be unendurable during peace-time; this was no concern of the Government. Gandhiji considered the bills an affront to the national honour of the Indian people, who had stood so loyally by the British during the war. Gandhiji appealed to the Viceroy not to proceed with the bills, but the more objectionable of the two was given the force of law. After persuasion had failed, Gandhiji organised the Satyagraha Sabha, which invited chosen people to sign a pledge to disobey wilfully the Rowlatt Act and other specified laws. He called upon the people to organise mass demonstrations against the Rowlatt Act. Inspired by adolescent quest for the new, my friend Khurshed Lal and I had migrated to Chandausi and joined the S. M. High School to do the final year of School Leaving. Chandausi was a dead-pool of politics, but on the morning of April 6, 1919, the day announced by Gandhiji for satyagraha, there was a nip in the air in the town. A batch of students, the high school seniors, went to the market and shops were closed for the mere asking. We observed a twenty-four-hour fast,

took out a massive procession and solemnly passed a resolution asking the Secretary of State for India to withdraw the oppressive Rowlatt Act. All this was the work of us—sheer urchins.

There were reports that at Delhi the police had opened fire on a satyagrahi procession killing several persons and Swami Shraddhanand, who was leading the procession, had laid bare his chest to the bayonet of a British soldier. The Swamiji was later assassinated by a Muslim fanatic. Generally, disturbances all over India followed the same pattern, the unarmed mob would throw brick-bats or indulge in unpreserved minor arson and looting, which was considered enough provocation for police firing. Bombay and Ahmedabad rioting took the normal course. Gandhiji who was busy in restoring peace at Ahmedabad interrupted his work and left for Delhi. However, he was put under arrest at Palwal and brought back. The worst was yet to occur. Incensed by the arrest of Dr Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr Satya Pal, a mob at Amritsar killed five Europeans including Dr Miss Sherwood. The act was reprehensible but the retaliation was barbarous. Indians crossing the lane, where Miss Sherwood had been killed, were made to crawl on their bellies.

On the Baisakhi day in 1919, some twenty thousand people had collected at Amritsar to hear Congress leaders in a walled square, known as Jallianwala Bagh, which had at one time been a garden. General Dyer came to the scene and ordered his men to fire on the unarmed people until their ammunition was exhausted. There was only one narrow escape, which had been blocked, and people ran helter-skelter. Hundreds of them were killed. Lahore, Kasur, Gujranwala and many other places became scenes of disturbances. The Punjab was put under martial law and unheard of cruelties and humiliations were inflicted on the people. For weeks, the province remained sealed and no news could leak out. There was nothing to show that the mob violence was organised or premeditated, but there was the whole evidence that the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, was out to teach the Indians a lesson and quieten them forever. The country wanted redress of the Punjab wrongs but all they got was a wishy-washy Hunter Commission inquiry.

The Muslims of India were perturbed at the treatment meted out to Turkey at Sevres. It was in complete violation of the solemn assurances given by Lloyd George. They organised themselves into Khilafat Committees. The Muslims would not accept non-violence as a faith but as a battle-strategy in deference to Gandhiji's wishes. Led by the inner voice, Gandhiji threw himself headlong into the Khilafat struggle. Many Hindu leaders joined Gandhiji but perhaps for less altruistic reasons: to forge the Hindus and Muslims into a nation. It may be a surprise to some that non-cooperation was started by the Khilafat Committee and the Congress only followed the lead. Gandhiji was impatient. He was so convinced of the righteousness of the Khilafat cause that he would not wait for the approval of the Congress session, which was to meet within a few months at Calcutta. Later, Khilafat was accepted as the national programme by the full session of the Congress at Nagpur, and non-cooperation started to redress the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs and achieve swaraj.

The non-cooperation to be offered was to be non-violent. It was not a negative but a dynamic movement. The title-holders were to renounce their titles. The triple boycott included law courts, schools and colleges and the councils. The Indians were to forsake foreign cloth and wear hand-spun and hand-woven khadi. The movement might be extended to non-payment of taxes. In my district not one person renounced his title, though there were many Hindu and Muslim title-holders. A few lawyers gave up their practice—Mela Ram for one year and Jhumman Lal for good. Both of them worked for the rest of their life for the Congress. Mela Ram was one of the leading lawyers of the local bar, able and promising but he was allergic to jail-going. He was the one person to escape when the entire Provincial Congress Committee, then in session, was arrested at Lucknow. But for this weakness, Mela Ram may have risen to top leadership.

India could not secure swaraj, as Gandhiji had promised, within one year. The country was, however, set on the right path. At Nagpur the Asian giant was awakened, never to rest until freedom in 1947.

Those Days of Non-cooperation

K A K A S A H E B K A L È L K A R

ONE IS THRILLED to remember the days of 1920, 1921 and 1922. The European war of 1914 had put to the test the strength of the British Empire. India was on the side of Britain then. Gandhiji came to reside permanently in India in 1915. He was for co-operation and hoped to win the confidence of the British people and secure the independence of India within the British Empire as a result of British confidence in India's loyalty to the Empire.

By 1920 Gandhiji along with the whole nation was disillusioned. The Muslims were greatly hurt by the policy of the British Commonwealth against the Khalifa who was then the religious head of the whole Islamic world.

Gandhiji made common cause with Muslim leaders like the Ali brothers and Hakim Ajmal Khan and others and it was in the Khilafat Conference that Gandhiji recommended to the Muslims the policy of non-cooperation and he advised the Hindus to join the Muslims. Very soon the Congress also accepted the policy of non-cooperation as a protest against the Khilafat wrong, the Punjab atrocities and practically against British insolence and antipathy towards India's aspirations.

It is about this exciting period of our modern history that I am asked to say something on the basis of my personal experiences and recollections of the period. The demand is justified because I was an active participant in the great struggle of those days.

It was for the first time since 1857 that the Hindus and Muslims came together and felt a genuine unity of hearts. The events of these four years proved how much our country and our people could gain and cultivate if only they could secure internal peace and harmony and a common policy for the independence of the country.

We, young men of Maharashtra, were yearning for the independence of the country. Culturally we preferred to call it *Poorna Swaraj* for *Bharatmata*. Immediately after coming out of college in Poona, I had joined the Revolutionary Party and was associated with both its open and secret wings, although we had managed to keep the two wings successfully apart. I had to my credit some experience in furthering "National Education" which in those days meant education having for its object the liberation of the mother country from the British yoke. I had also worked on the staff of a national Marathi daily in Bombay.

We learnt from experience that the masses of India had a genuine thirst for independence. They had great respect, bordering on reverence, for people who were known or suspected to be secret revolutionaries. They were prepared to finance the small revolutionary groups dreaming of Indian independence. The masses were prepared to take any risk for protecting these patriots, but we discovered to our dismay that the masses could not be enthused for any nationwide revolt against British rule. The experience of 1857 was sufficient to convince the people that the masses were not capable of any organised and sustained revolution for the liberation of *Bharatmata*. We were very sad at heart to find the inadequacy of our preparations and there was total darkness.

Personally I found that our effort at running a national school in the small principality of Baroda could easily be smashed by British directive and we were unable to secure the co-operation of either teachers or students to start an independent national school for reviving the will to swaraj.

My despair drove me to the Himalayas in the hope that meditation and *tapasya* would give us a new hope and a new plan.

The sacred atmosphere of the Himalayas helped me to recover my confidence and I thought that perhaps the Rama-krishna Mission or Tagore's Santiniketan could help in an indirect way to reorganise our struggle for independence. This time I promised myself that the struggle would be on the basis of Indian spirituality and culture. I went to Bengal and stayed for some time at Santiniketan. It was here that I met Gandhiji.

He was not then known as the Mahatma. He was referred to as *Karmavir Gandhi* and we affectionately called him Bapuji, which means honoured father. He invited me to join his Ashram which he was going to start. This I did in 1917 and I found that within three or four years Gandhiji had put life into all national activities for the assertion of the national soul.

That is why I say that it thrills my heart to remember the days when Gandhiji rushed from one place to another, from one province to another, energising the people and organising innumerable national activities.

A self-trained general of an unheard-of non-violent army and astute and far-seeing statesman, Gandhiji felt the necessity of organising the fighting spirit of the people on the one hand, and building national strength by carrying on a constructive programme for revitalising public life, on the other.

It was in 1920 that he asked us, his associates in the Ashram, to organise a national university for Gujarat. He had asked all the students in the country to non-cooperate with the British system of education. Thousands had obeyed his call. There must, therefore, be parallel national institutions to train the students both as nation-builders and soldiers of independence. The nation responded enthusiastically. There was already a national council of education in Bengal, ever since the partition of that unfortunate province. The Political Conference of Gujarat appointed a committee of twelve to prepare a plan of national education and put it into action. We worked like titans in those days and within four months of that resolution, the Gujarat Vidyapith was founded with an inspiring motto *Sa vidya ya vimuktaye* (True learning is what helps secure Independence). Mahatmaji was its Life-Chancellor, *Ajanmakulapati*.

Other provinces followed suit and we had the Bihar Vidyapith, the Kashi Vidyapith, the Aligarh Muslim University, the Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapith and many other national institutions with rather modest names.

At the Gujarat Vidyapith we trained students and sent them to the villages. We prepared the students for the coming fight and also we trained them for reviving village industries

and self-reliant village organisations. It was during those days that Gandhiji gave us his complete programme of national regeneration. We had to work for Hindu-Muslim unity. This included not only Hindus and Muslims but also Parsis, Christians, Jews and men and women of various denominations that comprised our composite nation. We worked for removal of untouchability. We took up the work of the uplift of the aboriginal tribes. Gandhiji gave a new impetus to the women of India to organise themselves for putting new life into Indian homes in the name of *Bharatmata*.

Immediately on returning to India in 1915, Gandhiji had started his Ashram in which the whole of the constructive programme (a modest name for Gandhiji's plan of nation-building) was to be worked out. Men and women of all communities and of various provinces speaking different languages lived together in the Ashram as one family. They were trained to live according to a rigorous code of life. These his Ashram people were Gandhiji's last strength. He could start any organisation of nation-building activities anywhere in the country through the trained young men of his Ashram.

Far-seeing statesmen recognised the wisdom of Gandhiji in organising this Ashram, and they started similar Ashrams in their part of the country. Politicians, on the other hand, had no respect for these Ashrams and they brushed them aside as Gandhiji's ascetic fads.

Today with public morality at a low level, people feel how wise Gandhiji was in supplying through the Ashrams a cadre of workers with moral worth and no political ambitions.

It was in regard to women that Gandhiji succeeded most. He combined for them complete freedom along with simplicity and austerity of the Ashram life with bodily labour as a backbone of the life lived there.

Gandhiji had discovered that the spirit of exploitation was ultimately the result of man's aversion to physical labour. Those who avoid manual labour necessary for gainful village industries and those who neglect bodily labour even for health are the very persons who are tempted to exploit the uneducated, landless and moneyless masses for their own benefit and com-

fort. Students of the Vidyapith and the Ashram were not afraid of going to the villages and taking a hand in physical activities like village sanitation, digging wells and, of course, carding, spinning and weaving.

And Gandhiji had not forgotten the national evil of drink that destroyed the physical and moral health of the people. He sent out preachers and organised a mission for boycotting all intoxicating drugs and drinks. He courageously started the non-cooperation movement after organising his constructive programme.

The non-cooperation movement put new life, new hope and new ambition in the whole nation. People forgot their petty differences and age-old prejudices. They worked hand in hand. Gandhiji was for *sarvodaya* which sometimes he paraphrased as non-governmental socialism in order to distinguish his line of approach from that of the Westerners. Gandhiji was never tired of quoting the American thinker Henry David Thoreau's famous utterance—"That Government is best which governs the least." Gandhiji wanted to build a non-violent society. Governments, even when they are established on universal suffrage, ultimately rely upon five sources of strength: the army, the police, jails, courts and penal laws. Every one of these aims at controlling society from the outside. Gandhiji wanted to develop the inner strength of society through national education and decentralised village industries.

In his Ashram Gandhiji had practically abolished caste. Everyone in the Ashram, whether a Brahman or a Harijan, a Christian or a Musalman, lent a hand in cooking the common meals. They all lived together, ate together and everyone in the Ashram had to take his turn in cleaning the Ashram latrines. No one could evade this work. Gandhiji blessed both inter-caste and inter-religious marriages. All religions in the eyes of the Indian people were to have equal status and rivalry between religions was replaced by a sense of familyhood. All religions were true and beneficent because they were given by God and they were all imperfect because they were accepted and understood by imperfect man. They should, therefore, freely borrow from one another and be humble enough to learn from one another. In fact, religions should all combine to combat irreligion which

destroyed the very sap of human society.

Non-cooperation with an alien Government, unsympathetic towards national ideals, was in fact a grand plan for internal co-operation on a basis which was as wide as humanity.

• I am tempted to give here a conversation which explains Gandhiji's philosophy of co-operation and non-cooperation in a nutshell. Mr Andrews, whom we all know as Deenabandhu and whose birth centenary was celebrated recently, once came to Gandhiji on behalf of our poet Rabindranath.

Mr Andrews, the common friend of Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi, once told Bapu: "Gurudev (Tagore) is very unhappy that you are talking of non-cooperation at a time when he (Gurudev) is pleading with all nations to develop the spirit of co-operation." Mohan told his Charlie, "Please tell Gurudev that I am pining for co-operation but it must be between equals, between parties that have respect for each other. You cannot think of co-operation between a master and a slave. I know my non-cooperation will some day help the British to give up their insolence of imperialism. We can then become very good friends and co-operators."

And the thing happened as Gandhiji expected when the British Government invited India to join the Commonwealth.

Travelling from one province to another, Gandhiji energised the people, guided national workers and he showed the people how to build homes on the basis of mutual help, co-operation and non-exploitation.

The people demanded from Gandhiji a national flag and he gave us a tri-colour *jhanda* which flutters today throughout the length and breadth of the land. Those were the days, I might say, of spiritual romance and chivalry. People hoped for everything and were prepared for any sacrifice. Nothing was felt to be beyond our capacity. The Government and the British nation took time to understand this moral fight but ultimately they capitulated and Gandhiji's hope and policy were proved to be successful when Britain, after recognising the complete independence of India, invited our nation to join the British Commonwealth. Gandhiji advised the nation to accept gracefully the invitation so generously extended. Jawaharlalji

accepted the advice but only requested Britain to drop the adjective 'British' from the Commonwealth. Today the Commonwealth is a grand multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-lingual, multi-cultural family which breathes hope for the future of humanity. The brave self-reliant non-cooperation of 1920 and 1921 had its fulfilment in the honourable co-operation of India with the Commonwealth.

Let me tell you of an incident that occurs to me while I am talking of the unity of hearts of Hindus and Muslims in those days.

I was practically editing Mahatma's Gujarati weekly *Navajivan* during the time he was in jail in connection with the non-cooperation movement. The Government recognised my services in due time and did me the honour of sending me to jail for one year. Half a dozen members of the Gandhian group were lodged together in a small yard of the Sabarmati prison. We enjoyed those days by reading books and discussing with one another.

One day we got news that some Muslim political prisoners in a different yard known as Khilafatwala (in fact, the jail people knew us also as Khilafatwala) had gone on a hunger strike. This news came to us through private channels, that is, surreptitiously. On enquiry we learnt that the Muslims had gone on a hunger strike because they were not allowed to say their *azan* (call to prayer). According to Islam, the *azan* must be repeated loudly enough to remind both men and disembodied spirits that it is time for prayers. So it must be repeated loudly enough. We prisoners in our yard sat together to decide upon our duty. We were all agreed that we must make common cause with our Muslim countrymen. I said, "Those Muslims from Sind and other places do not know the technique of a fast of protest. They are all fasting together. The strength, therefore, will not be greater than the strength of the weakest among them. They may not be able to hold out for long. The Government is determined to crush our spirit. I, therefore, propose that we start a chain of fasts, that I start on a fast on behalf of our whole group. I know I can stand the fast for a fairly long period. But we must be prepared for the worst. If I die, someone else must take up the fast and should continue

on behalf of all." We all agreed. The Jailer and the Superintendent came as usual and threatened us in their own way. I think on the third day of my fast, a secret message came from the Khilafat yard that they were finding it difficult to hold out any longer and, therefore, we should manage to send news to the outside world about the fast. There would then be a public agitation and the Government would have to yield. Otherwise our fast was bound to fail. I said, "I won't be a party to sending a message outside surreptitiously (that is bribing some of the lower policemen to carry a message or post a letter that we would give him), but I assure you I shall manage to make our fast known to the world outside without taking any secret step."

I sent a slip to the Jail Superintendent saying: "It is now four days. My strength is failing. I can't give up my fast. I may die any moment. I, therefore, want to make a dying declaration before the District Magistrate. You may send me to his court or bring him here."

The Police Superintendent was already unnerved by the situation. He knew that I was a staunch Gandhian and he may come into trouble if he did not act. So he sent word to the District Magistrate who was an Englishman. He came immediately. He saw me in my yard lying on my back. I sat down. He knew from me why I was fasting and, as expected, he started in his Governmental way. "Well, Kalelkar, you are a Hindu. You don't say any *azan*. You are not suffering from any handicap. Why should you fast?"

My reply was clear and short "You know, sir, I belong to the majority community. It is the duty and privilege of a Hindu to do his utmost to safeguard the rights of minority communities. You have, therefore, to satisfy the Muslim political prisoners." "But don't you agree that this shouting of *azan* at odd hours disturbs other people? How can that be tolerated?" argued the Collector.

"I would certainly agree if you could arrange to stop the shrill and agonising whistles of the railway engines from the railway station which is so close to us." I replied, adding: "If that must be tolerated, why not then a devout call to prayer from these friends?" He had no answer. The Collector saw that

I was adamant. So he went to the other yard and met the Muslim leader over there. He was no other than the well-known Muslim divine from Deoband, Husain Ahmad Madni. (They were all called Karachi prisoners.) I don't know the details of what happened there but the Collector advised the Jail Superintendent to allow the Muslims to say their *azan* in the usual way. Then he sent for a cup of milk and asked the Maulana Saheb to break his fast by drinking it in his presence. The Maulana took the milk. He was then brought on a stretcher to our yard. They knew that I would not accept mere heresay. The Maulana himself must tell me that he was satisfied.

The Maulana told me that his demand was granted and that he had already taken the milk. Then both he and the jail people requested me to break my fast. I was not satisfied with the arrangement but there was nothing left for me to insist on. The Magistrate had left and I had to deal with the jail authorities only. I told the Maulana, "You knew that I was on a sympathetic fast. You ought to have consulted me before breaking the fast. I know what will happen now. They will allow you to say *azan* and punish our fasting group for breaking the jail rule by fasting and we will all be separated from one another."

Things happened exactly as I had foretold. I was separated from my friends and sent away to a different yard. I could not fast against this punishment. I could have made it a condition before giving up my fast that the fasting members will not be punished according to jail rules. A fast for *azan* was a fast for a principle. "There is no dignity in fasting against jail punishment. Let us, therefore, accept the punishment with good grace!" I said.

Fortunately, the Jail Superintendent had a good opinion about me. So he put the Maulana and me in the same yard and separated both of us from the rest.

We were thus kept together—the Maulana and me—for more than a month. I took advantage of the situation by sending for the Marathi translation of the Koran and reading the book, I discussed many things with the learned Maulana. So my knowledge of Islam came to me from an authoritative source.

It was too much for our people to understand the far-seeing policy of Mahatma Gandhi. They easily succumbed to British machinations, and Hindu-Muslim unity which Gandhiji had just built was given up. We know the result of that weakness.

• I remember that some leaders (perhaps Jayakar was one of them) expressed their disapproval of Gandhiji's championing the cause of the Muslims in the matter of Khilafat. "What has Khilafat to do with our demand for swaraj?" they argued. "We have read all that you have written in justification of your step, but we are not satisfied. In the first place, it is a communal question with which the Congress should have nothing to do. And secondly, the Khalifa is not an Indian. He is the head of the Muslim world. Let the Muslim nations fight it out. Why should the Congress champion the cause of the Khalifa? The question is wholly outside our purview. We cannot understand you at all." Gandhiji simply said, "I feel that I have done the best service to India and our cause by taking up the Khilafat problem. You may not understand it today, but posterity will."

New Chapter in Freedom Struggle

J. B. KRIPALANI

DURING THE war, England had made many promises about reforms to be introduced in the governance of India after the war was over. Also, in order to get the help of Muslims, the British Prime Minister promised that in case the allies won the war, there would be no dismemberment of the Turkish Empire and the position of the Turkish monarch as the head of the Khilafat would not be disturbed. On both these points, the attitude of the British Government changed when victory was achieved. Instead of further measures of reform, the Government brought before the Assembly two bills framed after the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee which had been appointed to suggest ways and means to curb what were called extreme political activities. The bills were framed on the lines of the Defence of India Act which was to expire at the end of the war. They curtailed the liberty of the individual. Any police officer could arrest an individual on mere suspicion of unlawful activity designed against the foreign Government "established by law". People were stunned by these repressive measures. The Muslims were greatly agitated over the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire and the abolition of the Khilafat. Before any agitation against the Rowlatt bills could be started, the abolition of the Khilafat so much agitated the Muslim community that there was likelihood of violence breaking out. Gandhiji was approached by the Muslim leaders for help in their agitation against the abolition of the Khilafat. He was invited to attend several Khilafat conferences. He told the Muslims that he would willingly guide them, provided the agitation was based on non-violence. This placed the Muslim community, as they thought, in a difficult situation. They believed that as Muslims they could not eschew violence in the pursuit of their legitimate rights. That, they thought, would be going against the teachings of the Holy Koran. In the Khilafat Conference which met in Delhi in November 1919 and to which

Gandhiji and other Hindu leaders were invited, this question was hotly debated. However, Gandhiji came to the help of the Muslim divines. He pointed out that violence in the Koran was only permissive, not compulsory. This explanation was accepted by Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr Ansari and other Muslim leaders and divines. At this conference the Muslims had also invited Swami Shraddhanandji and some other leaders. The Muslim leaders were willing to forego cow slaughter if the Hindus helped them in the Khilafat agitation. However, Gandhiji dissuaded them from making such an offer. He said that it would be as wrong for the Muslims to make such an offer as it would be for the Hindus to accept it. He wanted the Hindus to help the Muslims as good fellow citizens and neighbours in their dire distress.

Agitation against the Rowlatt bills commenced first in the Central Assembly. All the elected members spoke against the bills. Srinivasa Sastri made a notable contribution to the debate. Madan Mohan Malaviya made a marathon speech lasting six hours. Gandhiji and several other leaders were present in the gallery of the Assembly. I too was there. I remember that after this speech Malaviyaji asked me what I thought of his performance. He always had a durbar of admirers round him. They all vehemently praised the speech. I was silent. He asked my opinion. I said, "Maharaj, your speech was too long, discursive and repetitive. This marred its effect." He shook his head in disagreement. But when the text of his speech came for correction, he told me that I was right in the estimate of his speech. This does not take away the eloquence of Malaviyaji and his mastery of the English language. His voice was described by Gandhiji as silvery. In spite of these speeches, the Government went its own way.

During the recruitment campaign, Gandhiji had walked along with his companions many miles in the hot sun. This had brought about dysentery. He was in a convalescent state but despite this he came to Delhi, met the Viceroy and other political leaders. Nothing came out of his interviews with the Viceroy. He then placed his proposal for non-violent direct action before the Congress leaders. They suggested that the agitation should not be only against the Rowlatt bills but that it should also be aimed at achieving swa-

raj. Swaraj in those days meant dominion status as in the White British colonies under the Crown. The Congress leaders also said that they would make the Khilafat question as their own. The two agitations came to be combined.

It was decided to hold a special session of the Congress in Calcutta, to be presided over by Lala Lajpat Rai, to discuss Gandhiji's proposals of non-violent non-cooperation, satyagraha, to redress the Khilafat wrongs and to achieve swaraj. This was a new and revolutionary idea. Though the leaders assembled at the special session of the Congress no more believed in constitutional agitation, they had not yet accepted the idea of direct action, though non-violent. The principal Congress leaders at the time were Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal, Malaviyaji, C. R. Das and Motilal. Some of the young leaders were Vallabhbhai, Rajaji, Jawaharlal, Sarojini, Dr Satya Pal, Shankerlal Bunker, Kitchlew, Jamnadas Mehta, Hasrat Mohani, Umar Subhani and my humble self. It was known that the old leadership was against Gandhiji's proposals. As was to be expected, all the Muslim leaders, notably Dr Ansari and Hakim Ajmal Khan, were enthusiastic about them. It was an exciting time. Though the old leadership opposed Gandhiji's proposals, the latter were carried through by a comfortable majority.

The resolution adopted by the Congress contemplated a progressive scheme of non-cooperation. It asked for the surrender of titles by Indians, resignation from the nominated seats in local bodies, boycott of official functions, boycott of Government and aided educational institutions by students and boycott of law courts by lawyers and litigants. The reformed councils were also to be boycotted. Further, people were asked to boycott foreign goods and actively promote swadeshi.

This opened a new chapter in the history of the Congress and the nation. The days of "prayer, petition and protest" were over. The people looked forward eagerly to positive and fearless collective direct action against the foreign Government. Gandhiji had made it clear that non-cooperation which would begin with the boycott of councils, law courts and educational institutions would develop into refusal to help in the civil and military administration of the country and ultimately non-payment of taxes. He also made it clear that the swaraj he

visualised was not merely political independence. It would be meaningless without economic and social justice. The programme of non-cooperation must be backed up by constructive activity which, among other things, meant work for communal unity, removal of untouchability, khadi, swadeshi, village industries, rural development, national education, prohibition, organisation of village panchayats, etc.

Three months after the special session at Calcutta, the Congress met in its annual session at Nagpur in December 1920. These three months were utilised by Gandhiji for going round the country to familiarise the people with the programme. The programme was again discussed at this session. In spite of opposition from the Liberal leaders and Jinnah, it was accepted. The resolution accepting the programme was moved by C. R. Das and seconded by Lala Lajpat Rai. With this session Gandhiji emerged as the unquestioned leader of the Congress and the country.

The response of the people to the programme was enthusiastic and spectacular. Thousands of students and teachers left schools and colleges. New national educational institutions were started in different parts of the country. Many lawyers gave up their practice and worked for the success of the new movement. The boycott of the councils by Congress legislators was complete. The propagation of hand-spinning and Hindustani was taken up in earnest. The prohibition movement along with the picketing of liquor shops led many people to give up the drink habit.

The Congress decided under Gandhiji's advice to raise a fund of rupees one crore. The fund was called the Tilak Swaraj Fund. It was to be used for constructive work. It was also decided to enlist one crore members in the Congress and provide 20 lakhs of charkhas for those willing to ply them. Gandhiji said that if the money was not spent within the year, it would be a mark of incompetence. The rest of the programme too was more or less carried out inside the year.

The enthusiastic response of the people made the Government nervous and it resorted to a policy of extreme repression. Restrictive orders were issued against some leaders. Proces-

sions and meetings were prohibited in many places. A grim tragedy was enacted at the Nankana Saheb (Punjab) in which nearly 200 Sikhs were shot down.

In pursuance of the resolution to boycott foreign cloth, a call was given to make a bonfire of it. The Congress also decided to boycott the impending visit of the Prince of Wales. There was a growing demand from the people for the launching of civil disobedience. Repression increased with increase of the tempo of the movement.

When the Prince of Wales arrived in India on November 17, 1921, he was greeted by a complete hartal. Wherever he went, the roads and streets were deserted. The Government retaliated by arresting all important leaders, including C. R. Das, Lala Lajpat Rai and Motilal Nehru.

When most of the leaders were in jail, the Congress met for its annual session at Ahmedabad in 1921. The atmosphere in the country was tense. A new sense of self-respect was evident everywhere. Gandhiji had promised swaraj within a year if the programme chalked out at Nagpur was fulfilled. The year was drawing to an end. Over 20,000 civil resisters were already in jail. People were impatient and ready for any sacrifice. The main resolution of the Congress at Ahmedabad reiterated its faith in non-violent non-cooperation, described civil disobedience as the only civilised and effective substitute for an armed rebellion, asked Congressmen to prepare the masses for individual and mass civil disobedience, and appointed Gandhiji as the sole executive authority, investing him with full powers to regulate the movement.

When Gandhiji was preparing to launch mass civil disobedience in Bardoli, reports of rioting came from Chauri Chaura (U.P.). There were also reports of violence from Bareilly (U.P.) and some parts of Madras. Gandhiji was shocked at the news. He, therefore, decided to suspend the movement and asked the country to work for constructive programme and thus prepare for civil disobedience. This was the beginning of our non-violent struggle for the freedom of our country from the foreign yoke under the unique leadership of Gandhiji.

What Is Non-cooperation ?

RAVISHANKAR MAHARAJ

IN GANDHIJI'S eyes, non-cooperation means fighting against sin, injustice and wrong.

After the happenings of the Punjab, Gandhiji felt that it did not reflect credit on us that Englishmen ruled over us; that being so, how were we to conduct ourselves towards them? We should at least have no hatred towards them. If any Englishman was ill, we should attend upon him; if thirsty, we should offer him water to drink; if he had lost his way, we should direct him to the proper path, and we should regard him with much love. But we should not obey his order because his order was to loot Indians; it was one which would bring about our downfall; hence we must break his laws. Hence he arranged a meeting in Ahmedabad. Abbas Tyabji presided over it. When the resolution on non-cooperation came up in that meeting, a number of good and intelligent people did not like it. They wondered what they would be left with after they non-cooperated with the Government. Who then would protect them? Moreover, the Congress had not then passed any resolution; should they before that pass a resolution for the whole of India? Before the Congress advanced, should they go ahead of it? This was how the debate went on.

Gandhiji tried a lot to assuage their fears and make them understand the position. After this non-cooperation resolution was passed, he wondered what they should do next. After thinking the matter over, he decided on the Bardoli satyagraha.

The first thought that occurred was about where the satyagraha was to be offered. Satyagraha should be offered at a place where there was non-violence among the people. In this calculation, Kheda was left out and Bardoli was chosen, because however great the hardship, the people there would not indulge in violence, they would not

speak untruth. Gandhiji said that these were the greatest soldiers who would bring them victory.

Even the satyagraha day was decided upon, but news of a very big storm having broken out at Chauri Chaura reached Gandhiji's ears. People burned down the Police Lines and threw policemen into the raging fire and that too after shouting "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai!"

Gandhiji was deeply hurt on hearing this news and he declared his decision to postpone the satyagraha struggle. "I suspend my struggle, because I do not wish to fight by means of violence. That is not in my nature and that is not in the interest of the country too."

People like us got a shock at that time, but the thought that whatever Mahatmaji did could never be wrong and whatever he would do would be for the good of the country reassured us. But there was one Swami Satyadevji. He was very learned and I too greatly respected him. He asked Gandhiji : "You are the son of a Bania; why did you withdraw that struggle? You wouldn't have done so were you the son of a Kshatriya." Gandhiji smiled and said: "It is true I am the son of a Bania. Therefore I know how to make preparations. Do you know why I halted the satyagraha struggle ? I had got the gun ready and taken aim, but the target moved; if I fired the bullet after the target had moved, the bullet would have gone waste and after my bullet had gone astray, we all would be useless. Then after careful thought I did not fire the gun, but that gun filled with non-cooperation has been left standing against the wall. When again there will be a target, I shall fire the gun." Laughing, he said further : "Swami, you are a sanyasi; you have coloured your clothes with yellow ochre, but in the true sense, they have not taken on the colour. A sanyasi's clothes are coloured yellow ochre for this reason that when a piece of wood burns, the desires it has give rise to smoke and flames. After all the desires have been burnt away, the flames cease as also the smoke and it becomes embers. The embers are without desires (flames) and their colour is yellow ochre. In like manner, a sanyasi's desires burn away and he becomes desireless, his brilliance becomes the colour of embers; therefore, clothes of

yellow ochre colour have been prescribed for a sanyasi. You have, of course, coloured your clothes, but many desires have still remained unburnt inside." Saying this and smiling, he went away. Even after that there were good relations between Swami Satyadev and Gandhiji and they lasted till the last day.

That satyagraha struggle remained suspended at that time, but afterwards there was flag satyagraha in Nagpur and the non-cooperation fight started in Bardoli too. We were able to see such good days of swaraj only as a result of Gandhiji's policy of non-cooperation with Englishmen.

Translated from the Hindi.

Revolution of 1921

HAREKRUSHNA MAHATAB

WORLD WAR I had been won. The power and the prestige of the British were at the highest peak on that account. The slogan of self-determination for small nations raised by Woodrow Wilson, the then President of the U.S.A., had raised hopes in all the colonial peoples, particularly in India. The British were to prove their bona fides at least to the Americans that they accepted the theory of self-determination. Montagu-Chelmsford reforms had been finalised; only elections remained to be held. Political stalwarts of those days were preparing to shoulder whatever responsibility would be offered by the reforms and prove to the British that they too were capable administrators. While this was the picture on one side, on the other side another picture was being carefully drawn by the revolutionaries whose activity had considerably increased owing to the aftermath of the Great War and to International Communism having undertaken to spread its ideology in the Asian countries for which a systematic programme of work had begun in China and India. The mighty British Government in India, determined to crush the revolution that was raising its head in its territory, was taking drastic steps both through the legislature of those days and outside to break the spirit of rising India. Just at this juncture a voice was heard: "This Government has become satanic and people should not co-operate with the Satan." Whence did this voice come?

We, the youths, heard it. We were then regularly following the speeches and writings of Annie Besant who was considered as an extremist leader in those days. We had some secret connection with the Bengal revolutionaries and also with the Communist agency set up by M. N. Roy. But the voice which we heard was so powerful and persuasive that we felt as if we were being addressed individually to respond to that unique voice. Some of us youths went to attend the special

session of the Congress which was held at Calcutta in September 1920 just to see the person who had raised that wonderful curious voice. There we saw Gandhiji and heard him repeat the same slogan and call upon the country to non-cooperate with the Government which had become "satanic". This call created wild enthusiasm in the audience. No other point of view was allowed to be heard. All the political leaders found themselves in an embarrassing position. Although the special session endorsed the resolution moved by Gandhiji,

- there were influential dissentients like Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das who thought of testing their point of view in the annual session of the Congress to be held at Nagpur a few months later.

Gandhiji's call went down as an avalanche clearing all obstacles and making its own way to every nook and corner of the country by the end of December 1920. Nobody could know how it was gathering its momentum. It appeared as if the wind itself was the messenger to carry the call of non-cooperation to even the remotest villages where the tribal people lived. We immediately responded to the call. But the eternal conflict of profession with passion was holding us back. The stage of excitement at the mental level was soon gone, but the stage of bringing down that excitement to the physical level was extremely difficult. To think of the British raj going was an extremely pleasant idea. It could be talked about. But to do something for that at the cost of one's career was altogether different. Doubts arose. What would happen if the movement did not succeed? Would the movement of non-cooperation succeed against the might of the British Government? Prospects of high Governmental posts and of the lucrative bar were persistently peeping into the mind and giving a fillip to all doubts. On the other hand, the movement was gathering momentum with great speed, not as a result of the scanty support it was receiving from the educated sections but as a result of unstinted instinctive support it was receiving from the uneducated downtrodden masses. One was feeling as if one would be swept away at any moment. "It is better to swim with the current, come what may, than be swept away against one's wish." This was the decision we made in January 1921, after the programme of non-cooperation had been unanimously adopted at Nagpur by the Indian

National Congress. The fact that Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das who was once the chief opponent of Gandhiji moved the resolution and it was seconded by Gandhiji immensely added to the momentum of the movement.

Those were the days of actual revolution. It cannot be conceived now how hundreds of youths jumped into the movement, not knowing how, where and when it would end. On the contrary, they knew fully well that their entire career was lost for ever and their life would be re-lived in a completely different way. Parents at home, teachers in college and sympathisers all round were against our decision and many were boycotted at home as they were treated as lost to the family which built high hopes on their career after education. But the driving force of the movement and of its leader was so great that the entire process of our thinking was completely metamorphosed. We came out on the streets to work out the revolution. As the Buddha called upon his disciples to go wherever their eyes turned and spread the gospel, Gandhiji called upon the youths from colleges to go to the villages and spread the message of non-cooperation far and wide. It did not matter if the days were without food and the nights were sleepless. It did not matter if the roads were thorny or even non-existent. But the villages must be visited. Gandhiji made a whirlwind tour of India and he literally did in his position what he wanted the youths to do in their position. Millions of people thronged to his meetings and listened to his message of non-cooperation with the "satanic Government".

There was something in his voice, something in his personality and certainly something in the nature of the movement which "made orators of the dumb and mountaineers of the crippled". Gandhiji talked to us youths. His words, soft and sweet, steeled our mind against any thought of going back on our decision.

The programme of non-cooperation was what used to be called then the "fivefold boycott":

(1) Boycott of legislatures, (2) boycott of educational institutions, (3) boycott of law courts, (4) boycott of titles awarded by the Government, and (5) boycott of foreign cloth.

Actual work for workers in villages was detailed in several categories such as enrolment of members who believed in the non-cooperation programme, collections for a fund which was named after Tilak as the Tilak Swaraj Fund, collection of foreign cloth to make bonfire of it, introduction of spinning-wheels in the villages and propaganda against drink and untouchability. All these detailed programmes were carried out with great enthusiasm as the entire mass of people could participate in them.

The non-cooperation movement which was in fact a militant movement, though it was non-violent, was conclusively proved to be an effective alternative to disorganised unsystematic violence which was the programme of the other revolution. That is why all efforts to initiate India in communism did not succeed as they did in China.

Civil disobedience, which was to be the culmination of the non-cooperation movement, did not come about on account of the Chauri Chaura incident in U.P. But before that all the jails of India were filled to overflowing and the prisoners included topmost lawyers and leaders and the unsophisticated villagers as well. At last Gandhiji was imprisoned.

This background is given to distinguish the period of revolution from the period of usual political agitation which followed. The period of revolution ended when the Indian National Congress gave up non-cooperation and accepted the programme of elections to the legislatures in 1924.

It should always be borne in mind that the politics of revolution is entirely different from that of elections to the legislatures, although the latter may be complementary to the former if the revolutionary side remains decidedly stronger. Parliamentary politics always tends to follow popular opinion which is based on traditional beliefs and predilections, whereas revolutionary politics attempts to bring about a change in the very process of traditional thinking and creates something new. That a revolution does not necessarily mean violence and that non-violence can be militant to bring about a revolution was proved by Gandhiji in the year 1921.

Let us hope that remembrance of the revolution of 1921 will create interest in militant non-violence to bring about the necessary social revolution in India.

Looking Back

S Y E D M A H M U D

THE ROWLATT ACT was passed in the Imperial Legislative Council in March 1919 over the strong protest of almost all its members. Many Indian members resigned. Jinnah and Mazharul Haq were foremost among them. Meetings were held all over India in protest. The British disregarded this manifestation of anger by the whole of India. This shattered all hopes of any tangible freedom for India after the war.

The Criminal Law Amendment Act in 1908, the Press Act in 1910, the Defence of India Act in 1915 had preceded this repressive Act (the Rowlatt Act). All these measures taken by the British Government in India were aimed at curbing the spirit for freedom.

That these repressive measures only led to an upsurge on an unprecedented scale became manifest in the following weeks and months. The protest meetings and hartals, the arrest and release of Mahatma Gandhi and the violence following the news of his arrest and, to top it all, the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy marked the rising tide of the freedom struggle and of the force with which the non-cooperation movement was to sweep the country in future. The British tried to stem this tide with brutal physical repression and violence. Following the passing of the Rowlatt Act, some violence took place in Amritsar. General Dyer was sent to keep order there. Peace and quiet prevailed for two days. Then on the third day people gathered to celebrate Baisakhi in Jallianwala Bagh without any malice or intention of violence. General Dyer surrounded this peaceful gathering with his armed men and showered innocent people with 1,656 rounds, killing four hundred and leaving twelve hundred badly injured. This shocked the whole of India. To justify this heinous violence Lt.-Governor O'Dwyer alleged a deep-laid conspiracy by Hindu extremists, Muslim pan-Islamists and Sikh militants

against the Government. Strangely enough, these allegations were disproved by M. L. Roberts and Cleveland, Director of Intelligence, Government of India. Nevertheless great atrocities were committed by the martial law administration in the Punjab. General Dyer ordered Indians in Amritsar to crawl on their bellies in the streets instead of walking in retribution against an assault on an Englishwoman. Col. Johnson ordered 1,000 students of Lahore College to march four times daily for three weeks 26 km under a scorching sun. The entire country felt deeply humiliated, insulted and injured.

Already in 1911 the annulment of partition of Bengal had been received as a great political defeat by Indian Muslims. The British control over Egypt, the Anglo-French entente on Morocco, the Anglo-Russian entente to divide the spheres of influence in Persia, the Italian raid on and occupation of Tripoli weighed heavily on them. In 1914 during World War I Turkey was left with no choice but to join forces with Germany. The allies had secretly decided on dismembering the Turkish Empire. This was proved beyond a shadow of doubt by Mr Harold Cox, one of the most eminent members of the British Parliament, in an article he wrote on the subject in an English magazine which had wide publicity. Turkey wanted the allies to give an assurance on this point. But Russia refused to do so. Worse still was the capture by the allies of two Turkish ships, *Brislaw* and *Gouba*. Thus Turkey had only Germany to turn to and she did so. The British started propaganda against Turkey in India provoking Maulana Mahomed Ali to write his famous article "The Choice of the Turk", which ran into forty pages and created a ferment in the minds of the intelligentsia and even other people generally. For this 'crime' he and his brother Shaukat Ali were interned, and so was Abul Kalam Azad in Ranchi. During the war there was little open agitation amongst the Muslims in India, but the British Government was aware of the undercurrents. The British Prime Minister, therefore, gave the following assurance as a sop to Muslim feelings: "Nor are we fighting to deprive Turkey of the rich lands of Asia Minor and Thrace which are predominantly Turkish in race." Even prior to this, the Government of India had come out with the assurances that the sanctity of the holy places of the Muslims would be fully respected. Notwithstanding all these assurances, the Turkish

treaty deprived her of her Arab provinces and also Thrace, which was given to Greece, and stipulated that the Turkish Sultan shall not be the Khalifa of Islam. The Turks fought the Greeks inflicting on them a crushing defeat and took back Thrace. In fact and in truth Turkey was not defeated on the battlefield. On the contrary, it gave the British a crushing defeat on the field of Kuttu Lamara. The British also wanted to take control of the Bosphorus and land forces on its coast but they were repulsed by the Turks. But the British played their usual trick and secretly through Lawrence got the Sheriff of Mecca to revolt against the Turks. Through this trick all the Arab provinces of the Turkish Empire revolted and fought alongside the British on the promise of getting independence. Here Turkey was taken by complete surprise and got disorganised and defeated. Germany was also defeated. The frustration of Muslims in India was complete.

The Ali brothers were released in December 1919 and came straight to the Amritsar Congress and were given a huge and enthusiastic reception. They infused it with a new vigour. A Muslim deputation waited on the Viceroy in January 1920. The Viceroy said nothing but promised facilities for a deputation to go to England. Muslim opinion was divided on the question of sending a deputation. During his stay in England in 1914, Gandhiji had formed some idea of the conflicts that tore politically-conscious Muslims. Through the years 1915 to 1918 when he deliberately avoided controversial politics, Gandhiji's advice was often sought by Muslim leaders on the future of the Khilafat. Gandhiji advised them to have patience and not to have recourse to violence. He now suggested that a sub-committee should consider the question further. The sub-committee consisted of Abul Kalam Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji devised a programme of non-cooperation with the Government. Much earlier Gandhiji had met the Muslim leaders at Delhi and it had been decided that Gandhiji should tour the country to gauge Muslim feeling. The Ali brothers and Abul Kalam Azad and others accompanied him, and he met a large number of Muslims all over India and became aware of their deep resentment against the British on the Khilafat issue. He now declared that Hindus could not remain silent when Muslim hearts were so much agitated on this issue. The Hindus must

make common cause with the Muslims. Gandhiji presented his plan of non-cooperation. The Khilafat Conference held at Calcutta in 1920 and presided over by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad approved Gandhiji's plan. On June 9, 1920, the Central Khilafat Committee met at Allahabad and also approved it. Gandhiji was assured of the full co-operation of the entire Muslim community of India and he knew that the Indian Muslims were readily at his beck and call and would follow him in his non-cooperation movement. Thus he could start the non-cooperation movement on the strength of the Muslims alone. This was the greatest service rendered by the Muslims of India to the cause of national independence. The non-cooperation resolution could not have been passed at the special Congress session in Calcutta in 1920 but for these two resolutions passed earlier at Calcutta and Allahabad Khilafat Conferences. Gandhiji at that time (June) wrote to the Viceroy that unless the terms of the Sevres Treaty were changed in favour of Turkey and the Government pledge kept, he would ask the Muslims to start a non-cooperation movement and invite the Hindus also to join it. This was the turning-point in modern Indian history so far as the struggle for independence was concerned and so far as Hindu-Muslim relations were concerned. Gandhiji's master-mind and statesmanship played wonderfully well, knowing that it was now or never. This sagacious and far-seeing statesman thus got Hindus also to join the non-cooperation movement. He committed the Hindu majority into alliance with the Muslim minority in the movement. He foresaw months before the Calcutta Congress that when the Muslim minority was committed to the non-cooperation movement, the Hindu majority could not keep away from it. At the Calcutta Congress Lala Lajpat Rai, the President, and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and all the leaders of the Tilak School opposed the non-cooperation resolution. And so did the great and valiant C. R. Das, though for different reasons. (Rabindranath Tagore wrote about non-cooperation as a doctrine of negation, exclusiveness and despair which threatened to erect a Chinese Wall between India and the West.) In spite of all this the non-cooperation resolution was passed at this special session of the Congress in September 1920 as Gandhiji completely committed himself to it. He mentioned the Punjab tragedy and the

Hunter report as examples of British mala fides and on the other hand argued that "the sorrow of our sister community was our sorrow. Supposing we had independence, how could we refuse to sympathise and help the Muslims in their just case for Khilafat? For a hundred years such an opportunity for bringing Hindus and Muslims together would not occur again. Apart from the Khilafat question even for Indian freedom such an opportunity should not be missed." Since then the Congress came into the hands of Gandhiji and it was for him to lead it whichever way he liked.

Non-cooperation work started. T. A. K. Sherwani of Aligarh was perhaps the first man to be sent to jail for one year for making a seditious speech. His brother, N. A. Sherwani, was perhaps the first to leave Government service. It is from this time that the programme of khadi and courting imprisonments also started. The scene of Hindu-Muslim unity was pleasing to see everywhere and in every meeting. Sometimes wounded cows were seen running in the bazaars and crowds of Hindus and Muslims shouting after them: "It is the work of the C.I.D. It is the work of the C.I.D." The Khilafat was generally regarded in the villages as the opposite government. In jails sometimes warders would come to important non-cooperating prisoners pleading recommendation for service under the Khilafat! Suits were either withdrawn or brought under a compromise. In Bihar, the Araria sub-division of the Purnea district was very well organised in this respect. Congress and Khilafat courts were doing good work in getting the cases compromised or withdrawn from English courts. Dr Rajendra Prasad and I went to Araria several times to see these courts at work and were greatly impressed by their earnestness and sincerity. Hindu-Muslim cases were particularly brought to a compromise.

Vivid glimpses arise before me of that wonderful era. At the 1920 Congress at Nagpur, Maulana Mahomed Ali was persuading C. R. Das to give up his practice. The latter argued that his earnings would help the movement as the movement needed money also. Mahomed Ali not relenting fell down at C. R. Das's feet. Large-hearted and great as he was, he was overwhelmed by this and then and there declared that he would give up his practice and join the movement as a whole-

time worker. Before this Mazharul Haq, a leading barrister in Bihar who lived like a prince and was known to be one of the best dressed men in India, giving up his palatial house went to live in a small kuchcha bungalow near the Ganga at Digha Ghat. Such was the effect of Gandhi's non-cooperation movement on these great men. Mazharul Haq now lived like a fakir and slept on a mat on the floor. He grew a long beard and looked like a saint. A number of engineering students non-cooperated and joined him. Later on, he built the famous Sadaqat Ashram of Patna which became the centre of the non-cooperation movement and national activities. In passing, one thing more may be mentioned about Mazharul Haq. He was used all his life to taking a glass of whisky in the evening. When he decided to join the non-cooperation movement, he broke the bottles of best wine in his cellar and left the house starkly dressed in a kurta and trousers to live in his kuchcha bungalow and never took wine again. It was the wonder of wonders what deep influence Gandhi's movement exercised on such stalwarts. At the Nagpur Congress Jinnah, a strong and well-known Congressman, came to attend the Congress for the last time. He saw a changed Congress. People were sitting on mats instead of chairs. But at Gandhiji's request he was provided with a chair to sit on. Jinnah wanted to win over the Congress by his legal and political arguments. The assembly was shouting and interrupting him. He did not seem to mind. He argued and argued but no one was convinced. During his speech he mentioned Gandhiji as Mr Gandhi. People shouted: "No! No! Say Mahatma Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi!" He kept quiet for five minutes and at last said, "Very well, Mahatma Gandhi! I say Mahatma Gandhi!" When he mentioned Maulana Mahomed Ali as Mr Mahomed Ali, the crowd again shouted: "Say Maulana Mahomed Ali! Maulana Mahomed Ali!" He emphatically announced, "No! I will not!" The shouting continued for ten minutes but he kept standing quietly. At last the crowd yielded, but he did not yield! Kanji Dwarkadas has described in his recent book the scene of Jinnah addressing the Nagpur Congress. Jinnah, who became Qaid-e-Azam later, did not also like compulsory wearing of khaddar and plying of charkha by Congressmen.

A very interesting episode about Mrs Rati Jinnah may not be out of place here. Mr Jinnah would not have changed

so completely and become a Qaid-e-Azam if only Mrs Jinnah who was a most charming, straightforward and upright young lady had continued to live. If we take it for granted that Mr Jinnah could never have imagined making a Viceroy cross, we cannot take it for granted in the case of Mrs Jinnah who insulted the most powerful and cunning Viceroy in a disarmingly innocent manner. Both husband and wife were once invited to the Viceregal Lodge to dinner. Mrs Jinnah was given the seat of honour, sitting next to the Viceroy. Lord Reading started saying how he hated coming to India and describing elaborately his utter dislike of being here. When he had finished, Rati quietly and in an innocent manner asked: "Then, my Lord, why did you come at all? Who compelled you to do so? Not India at least?" The whole dining-table was shocked. No Viceroy was perhaps ever insulted before at his own table. The old Viceroy began lecturing: "Young lady, you should not be so rude to your Viceroy." "I was not rude to you at all, my Lord," she said. "You disliked coming to India and I simply asked: Why then did you come at all?"

For once I had the honour of dining with the future Qaid-e-Azam, when Mrs Jinnah invited me to dinner at their house in Bombay in 1921. The evening passed off pleasantly as Mr Jinnah was not so angry with me then as he later became. The last meeting I had with him was in 1932 when T. A. K. Sherwani and I went to talk with him at his invitation about joint and separate electorates. In 1945 when Gandhiji asked me to go and talk to him about sharing power at the Centre almost half and half, I refused to go. When Gandhiji insisted I had to tell him, "He will kick me out of his house if I were unfortunate enough to call on him." Jinnah's contempt of all other Muslim leaders by now had turned into hate.

Sometime in 1921 Mahatma Gandhi and the Ali brothers came to Patna. The former stayed with Mazharul Haq and the latter two stayed with me. Maulana Mahomed Ali went to see his old teacher of Aligarh, Mr Tipping, who was the Principal of Patna College at that time. Formerly Tipping was the senior English Professor at Aligarh and Mahomed Ali had been his favourite pupil as a good student of English. Tipping seeing Mahomed Ali was furious with him and used all sorts of words against him. Mahomed Ali, who was himself of a fiery temper,

kept complete silence at his teacher's anger and abuse. Then they parted company and Mahomed Ali came back to my place. An hour later Tipping and his wife both came running to my place to meet Mahomed Ali. They knew of his fiery temper when he was a student and wondered what change non-cooperation had now wrought in him. It had made the fiery Mahomed Ali a lamb. They came and profusely apologised and compelled Mahomed Ali to come back to their place to take tea which they had not served him in the first instance. This shows what respect Mahomed Ali as an Indian had for his own teachers.

The human relationship between the Englishman and the Indian rebel and between the Indian rebel and the loyalist Indian sometimes led to odd and delightful situations in the former case, and to painful results sometimes in the latter case during those years of non-cooperation.

Once the Khilafat Committee office was being searched by the police in Bombay under the supervision of Police Commissioner Kelly. I was the general secretary of the Khilafat Central Committee. Till late afternoon Police Commissioner Kelly looked for indicting material and I saw he had grown tired. I asked him, "Would you like to have a cup of tea?" Kelly at once retorted, "Oh, I'm dying for a cup of tea!" And he genially took it when it was served to him praising and admiring the tolerant and understanding attitude of the non-cooperation people whom he was set upon to implicate for seditious activities! The same Kelly once chided an officer in Bombay for arresting me long before the scheduled time of departure of the train that was to take me on a warrant to Bihar. "He would have come at the appointed time if you had only phoned him." In quite a contrast to this was the attitude of the I.G. of Bihar, Banatwala, an Indian. When I was in Muzaffarpur jail I was locked up in my cell at 5 p.m. in grueling summer. The English District Magistrate, T.W. Bridge, regretted this but showed his helplessness. An Indian member of the Governor's Executive Council came ostensibly to inspect the prison, but in fact to see me. Though I did not tell him anything, the D.M. told him of this inconvenience. He at once ordered that I need not be locked up in my cell after 5 p.m. in that hot season. For four or five days I enjoyed this

liberty. Then I was again locked up after 5 p.m. "What had happened?" I wondered. I was told it was Inspector-General Banatwala who was making it an issue of undue interference by an Executive Councillor! At Buxar jail where I was transferred from Muzaffarpur, the jailor assaulted and spat upon a sadhu non-cooperator, and his prisonmates in the cells numbering a few hundred started a hunger strike in protest. Word was sent to me in my separated and distant cell about this and I starved in sympathy for three days. The jailor came and apologised to me for the beatings and begged other prisoners to end the hunger-strike which they did. Meanwhile, one of the non-cooperators got released and the story of the beatings and the hunger-strike appeared with his reference in the *Motherland*, Mazharul Haq's newspaper, and there was much to do. Upon this the Government ordered an enquiry and the Commissioner visited the jail. The jail authorities quite falsely produced the registers showing entries of food rations having been supplied to the prisoners continuously, and this was enough to set aside the non-cooperators' claim. Inspector-General Banatwala went out of his way to bring a defamation suit against Mazharul Haq and the released non-cooperator who had given out the story. On my release I was called as a witness by the previously released non-cooperator (Mazharul Haq himself made no defence). The Magistrate, Johnson, upheld the evidence. I gave in the face of the Prosecutor's vehement accusations. An interesting thing is that when the Magistrate asked the Jail Superintendent, who too was an Englishman, whether I had told him in jail about the jailor having apologised to me, the Superintendent said he did not remember. But when the Magistrate asked him whether he would admit having been told this if I said I had told him, the Superintendent replied: "If Dr Mahmud says he told me about it, then he surely did tell me!"

When the news about Khilafat funds was published in *The Statesman*, it became a sensational story. The same Prosecutor had me summoned again. I went with all the files and papers of Khilafat accounts and laid them on a huge table specially brought into the court and invited the Prosecutor to examine them! The English Magistrate later wrote to me apologising for summoning me again, but pointed out that it was in my interest also since the allegations had

been disproved in a court of law. When I took all these papers to Calcutta and displayed them in public meetings in different localities and invited people to examine the accounts and see if they were properly kept and audited or not, and also appointed a committee of Indian editors to examine the accounts fully, it became a still more sensational story and *The Statesman* came in for large-scale condemnation. Then *The Statesman* hastened with clarifications, denials and apologies and all in all had a rough time of it.

As I look back over those years, my tete-a-tete with Lord Northcliffe emerges as a very lively and amusing episode. Sir Stanley Reed, who was then the Editor of *The Times of India*, wrote to me that Lord Northcliffe wanted to have a talk with me on Khilafat affairs in Bombay. When I reached *The Times of India* office I found a short pompous man ensconced in a chair. He talked with the non-chalance of a self-confident man. He said, "I can help you in your Khilafat matters." I replied. "Yes, Lord, I know you can." "But", he said, "first tell me why Lloyd George is so much enamoured of the Greeks." I replied, "You, my Lord, must know better than I do." "No, no, you tell me if you know anything about it," he persisted. I at once realised that he wanted me to say something against Lloyd George. So I said: "Lloyd George has taken two million and a half sterling from Sir Basil Zaharoff (a Greek millionaire)." Northcliffe at once shot back, "Do you mean to insinuate that a British Prime Minister has taken a bribe?" I said, "I do not know, he might have taken it for some other purpose." (Two months later Lloyd George's party funds became a famous affair.) He then asked me to come to England to keep him well posted on Khilafat matters so that he could fight on this issue with Lloyd George. I said, "No, my Lord, we sent two delegations and nothing came of it. We shall do whatever we can in our own country." "You Muslims and we English, we do not know the value of propaganda," he said. I laughed and said: "Does it lie in your Lordship's mouth to say so?" (The German Kaiser had said that it was not the British army which had defeated him but Lord Northcliffe's propaganda.) He also laughed in turn, saying, "I know the value of propaganda. It was I who did propaganda against Germany but my people don't know it. The Hindus know the value of propaganda well. Please, stop Gandhi, stop Gandhi!" I said, "I don't know what

your Lordship means by stopping Gandhi." He said, "I mean what I say. Stop Gandhi. Don't you understand English?" I said: "A little, my Lord." He asked: "What is Gandhi to you?" I said, "He is our leader." And he said, "Your leader! He is a Hindu and you are a Musalman!" I said, "Your Lordship forgets that I am an Indian too!" He gestured maliciously three times with his hands: "They will grind you down, grind you down, grind you down!" I said, "I don't think they will be foolish enough to do that and even if they did, it will be like a stronger brother ill-treating a weaker one, but all the same we will not be slaves!" "Slaves, slaves," he said, "you are equal partners in the Empire!" I said, "Yes, my Lord, like in South Africa!" "Oh, South Africa! South Africa!" he said. "We went to war with South Africa for your sake!" "Ah! We are going to leave India. You insult our young men." I said, "Thank you, my Lord. We do not insult your young men. It is we who are insulted in our own land." He said, "We will leave India and before we reach Port Said you will send us frantic telegrams to come back. But we will not come back." I said, "No, my Lord, you will receive no such telegrams. You will be disappointed." A little later he sent me two of his books just then published in America, on Muslim affairs, from on board the ship in which he was to set sail.

The Prince of Wales (later, King Edward VIII) visited India at the assurance of Lord Reading, the Viceroy, that nothing untoward would happen. But he proved to be the most unwelcome guest in India. He was boycotted wherever he went. He was to visit Calcutta last and the Viceroy was anxious that, at Calcutta at least, he should receive a good welcome. Through one of his Indian Executive Councillors he sent word to C. R. Das that if the Prince of Wales were accorded a thorough and hearty welcome at Calcutta, he (i.e., Lord Reading) would recommend Provincial Autonomy in India at an early date. C. R. Das liked the offer and put himself in communication with Mahatma Gandhi. The latter stipulated that all political prisoners including the *fatwa* prisoners should be released. (At the Karachi Khilafat Conference a *fatwa*, a religious decree, was issued that it was religiously unlawful for Muslims to serve in the British army. For this the Ali brothers, Dr Kitchlew, Maulana Husain Ahmad Madni and some other Muslim leaders and Sri Shankaracharya were arrested and, except Sri Shan-

karacharya, given two years' rigorous imprisonment. These prisoners were called the *fatwa* prisoners.) Lord Reading consented to release all political prisoners excepting the *fatwa* prisoners. Gandhiji did not agree and the talks broke down. C. R. Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru and some other leaders did not like this and blamed Gandhiji for causing the talks to break down for the sake of a few individuals. This was not really the case. Gandhiji feared that Muslims would not like that the *fatwa* prisoners should continue in jail, but much more than this Gandhiji's idea was to test the sincerity of Lord Reading's offer. This was the beginning of a temporary rift between Gandhian ideals and these big leaders. Later on, differences of opinion divided Congressmen into changers and no-changers. (Changers were those who wanted to change the policy of boycotting the legislatures and no-changers were those who wanted to adhere to the policy of non-participation.) The changers were known as Swarajists. This difference was sharpened at the Gaya Congress over which C. R. Das presided. Now instead of boycotting the British, Congressmen began to boycott one another. Though C. R. Das was the President of the Congress, his Working Committee consisted of no-changers. Consequently bitter controversy prevailed. A meeting of the A.I.C.C. was called at Bombay sometime in 1923. I was touring in Madras with Bi Amma, mother of the Ali brothers. I issued a statement from there on behalf of Dr Ansari, Purushottam Das Tandon, Jawaharlal Nehru (of course, with their telegraphic permission) and me, requesting those members of the A.I.C.C. who were no-changers but were not in favour of obstructing the Swarajists from participating in the legislatures to meet in Bombay a day before the A.I.C.C. session to consider what steps should be taken at the A.I.C.C. meeting. We met and found that persons holding such a view were in a sufficiently large number and that we could force our view on the outright no-changers. At the A.I.C.C. we abstained from voting and the no-changers lost. Thereupon they resigned (the Working Committee members) and C. R. Das also resigned. Dr Ansari became the President with Jawaharlal Nehru and me as General Secretaries of the A.I.C.C., and a new Working Committee was formed. C. R. Das called this party a Centre Party which Jawaharlal Nehru very much resented.

When Gandhiji came out of jail he could not bring his

Swarajist friends round to his view. And when he made spinning compulsory for Congressmen, the feelings in the party became embittered. Thus he retired, leaving the Congress to the Swarajists to try their policy. C. R. Das died in 1925. Within four years the council entry policy of the Swarajists proved a complete failure and all sorts of communal matters cropped up before them. Pandit Motilal Nehru became disgusted and abandoned the legislature with his followers.

Meanwhile, the Viceroy and the British Government generally succeeded in driving a wedge between the Hindus and the Muslims and the amity which had prevailed for five years began to disappear. The engineered Moplah rebellion was a sordid instance of this kind and then *shuddhi* and *sangathan* and *tabligh* and *tanzim* came to the fore, driving the wedge deeper. But the non-cooperation movement was yet to see a climax.

In December 1929 at the Lahore session of the Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru became the President and demanded full freedom for India. Sri Prakasa and I became the General Secretaries. A wave of enthusiasm swept over the whole country. Young men and women came out filled with the spirit of self-sacrifice and freedom. There was an unprecedented demonstration of solidarity and defiance. Women picketed wine shops and got arrested. In Allahabad, Kamala Nehru was arrested, and so were other women of the Nehru family. The Government became alarmed and censorship was very strictly imposed. Communication among Congressmen in different parts of the country became impossible. Sri Prakasa having by now been arrested, the whole Congress work devolved upon me. Jawaharlal Nehru (also in jail) suggested a messenger service to get over the difficulties of correspondence and communication. I started a messenger service and a network of non-co-operation couriers covered the whole country. When the boycott of cigarettes in 1930 started, the representatives of cigarette manufacturers came running to me to Allahabad from Calcutta.

The discomfiture of cloth-mill owners was worth seeing when foreign and mill cloth was boycotted. We put certain conditions to the millowners and decided to lift the boycott from those mills which accepted them. Shankerlal Banker ap-

proached me. The Lal-imli mills were badly hit, but they found themselves unable to fulfil our conditions. Frantic wires from its English Directors were received from Bombay asking us to modify our terms. Thus the movement caused such a commotion as the British Government had never seen before and the sympathisers and collaborators of foreign capitalists never imagined. The same cloth-mill owners who came cringing to us in 1931, under different pressure in 1932 when Congressmen were again in jail, denied ever having made any overtures to us. The spinning-wheel was at the zenith. The non-cooperation movement was in full swing. Still there were small-minded men who laughed at the sight of satyagrahis courting imprisonment and mocked them for wearing khadi. How wrong were all those who thought of these things as fatuous and ridiculous! For, courting imprisonment meant looking at the mighty foreign power with contempt. It meant taking out all the terror and awe of the imperial authority from the hearts of the rank and file and from the heart of the common man. The guns and gaols of the imperial power lost their frightening quality through Gandhi's magic. When guns were faced smilingly and prisons courted by millions, what awe was left for the might and arms of the Empire? These things built character for those who were amenable to character-building and did produce men of sterling quality.

The links of the chain that bound Asia and Africa extended from Gibraltar to India. The non-cooperation movement dealt the first blow on the chain and when its first link in India was smashed, the whole chain gave way.

And what of Hindu-Muslim unity? Its brief spell of five years in the earlier phases of non-cooperation movement is not without significance. If such unity was forged for four or five years, it could be forged again and in spite of all the present and past disappointments it will be forged one day, and then it will be lasting unity.

What the principle of non-violent non-cooperation meant to the world was clearly demonstrated during the Gandhi Centenary celebrations abroad. How in far-flung countries it has made its impact came out vividly in the enthusiasm with which they celebrated his centenary. *

Martin Luther King Jr in the U.S.A. was inspired by this principle and shining out with its light bore witness to its splendour before the world.

Crusading for a Cause

K. P. KESAVA MENON

I RETURNED from England in August 1915 after qualifying for the bar and settled down for practice in Calicut. World War I was going on in full swing. Mrs Annie Besant thought that England's difficulty was India's opportunity and started her Home Rule movement. She was a great friend of India. She began her work connected with the Home Rule League with her characteristic energy and enthusiasm. A new daily by the name *New India* was started by her which became the mouth-piece of the Home Rule League. I was appointed the Secretary of the Malabar branch of the League. Before that I had been elected as the Secretary of the Congress Committee.

I had hardly started my practice at the bar, when I found myself fully absorbed in political work. Some well-meaning senior members of the bar advised me that a young barrister like me should concentrate on professional work. But politics attracted me more and I found it difficult not to respond to the country's call.

Edwin Montagu, the new Secretary of State for India, made a declaration in the British Parliament in August 1917 to the effect that "the policy of His Majesty's Government was that of increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire".

Soon after this declaration, Mr Montagu came to India to ascertain the views of individuals and organisations regarding the proposed reforms. On behalf of the Home Rule League, a memorandum was presented to the Secretary of State and the Viceroy at Delhi by a deputation. I was a member of that deputation, which included C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, A. Ranga-

swami Iyengar, Nilambur Rajah and others. Mrs Besant led the deputation.

It was there that I talked to Mahatma Gandhi for the first time. The Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, and the Secretary of State, Mr Montagu, received the deputation in a specially erected tent. New Delhi was in the process of construction then. While waiting for our turn to see the Viceroy and the Secretary of State, we were seated in a tent a few yards away from the Viceroy's. Mahatma Gandhi was waiting in that tent, in a thick khaddar coat and Kathiawar turban, a shawl thrown over his shoulders. He was standing there. I introduced myself to him as the Secretary of the Malabar Home Rule League. While talking to him I was called to join the other members of the deputation to present our memorandum.

In 1918, I shifted my practice to Madras at the instance of some friends. There I organised a society called the Neo-Fabian Society to study political, social and economic problems. There were only 10 members in the Society including B. P. Wadia, V. Chakarai Chetty, E. L. Ayyar and Miss Chattopadhyay (Mrs Sarojini Naidu's sister). We used to meet once a week in a member's house and hold discussions on a specified subject for a couple of hours and after that we had dinner at the same place. Two pamphlets were issued by us — (i) *Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms* and (ii) *Problems of Franchise in the Madras Presidency*. Both of them were highly commented on by the Fabian Society of London.

When the Montagu-Chelmsford report on political reforms was published, the country was divided into two parties — one supporting the reforms, the other advocating their rejection on the ground that they were disappointing and unsatisfactory. It was in the heat of this controversy that a session of the Malabar District Conference was held at Manjeri (1919).

A party led by Mrs Besant was for acceptance of the reforms, whereas a strong body of opinion within the Congress advocated their rejection. S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Editor of *The Hindu*, presided over the conference. At the conference, K. P. Raman Menon moved a resolution for the rejection of the proposed reforms. L. A. Subbarama Iyer, a leading lawyer of the Palghat Bar, seconded the resolution. Mrs Annie Besant

with her characteristic eloquence moved an amendment for the removal of the words "unsatisfactory and disappointing". Nilambur Rajah supported Mrs Besant. I supported Raman Menon's resolution. Several speakers, including Manjeri Rama Iyer and K. Madhavan Nair, participated in the heated discussion which followed. When the resolution was put to vote, it was carried by a large majority amidst thundering cheers. Mrs Annie Besant and her followers left the hall. I considered Mrs Besant's attitude unfortunate. But that did not in the least affect my regard and affection for her.

One thing was clear. The progressive party was beginning to take hold of the Congress. The horrible tragedy of the Jallianwala Bagh, the cruel martial law administration in the Punjab and the mounting unrest in the country were creating a situation to make India ready for the non-cooperation movement under the dynamic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The coming into the scene of that great leader with his non-co-operation programme woke up the country. Lawyers suspended their practice, many surrendered their titles to the British Government, councils were boycotted, students left colleges and schools. The long awaited liberation movement began in right earnest.

I was practising in Madras when the Nagpur Congress passed the non-cooperation resolution in 1920. C. Rajagopalachari was then in Madras. We used to see each other frequently in those days. T. Prakasam, a leading member of the Madras Bar and fearless fighter for freedom, also used to see me occasionally and discuss the situation with me. One day Rajagopalachari came and told me, "Mr Kesava Menon, your place is now in Malabar."

It was difficult for me to leave Madras then. My wife and children were there with me and I had just begun practice. I was hesitating what I should do, when a fervent appeal came from Malabar friends for me to return to Calicut.

One of the steps taken by the Nagpur Congress was the re-organisation of the Congress Provinces on a linguistic basis. A New Kerala Congress was accordingly formed comprising Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. K. Madhavan Nair was elected Secretary of the K.P.C.C.

The Khilafat movement also began to spread rapidly. A number of Khilafat Committees were started especially in the Ernad area. Muslims who kept away from the Congress till then began to join the Congress in large numbers. Hindu-Muslim unity became the watchword. The rising tide of enthusiasm was sweeping over the country. This caused the Government some anxiety. In Calicut public meetings were prohibited. This made the situation worse. Yaqub Hasan, a well-known Muslim leader of Madras, was announced to speak at a public meeting in Calicut. When the meeting was prohibited, the leaders including Yaqub Hasan, K. Madhavan Nair, U. Gopala Menon and P. Moideen Koya decided to disobey the order and address the meeting. They were arrested. Subsequently they were tried and sentenced to six months' simple imprisonment and taken to Cannanore Central Jail. This created a stir in the country. When I received the news of the tense situation in Malabar, Rajagopalachari induced me to start immediately for Calicut and he also accompanied me.

We could see the excitement and enthusiasm of the people as we travelled from Olavakkot to Calicut. There were crowds waiting at every railway station. When we reached Calicut, there was a big crowd at the station and outside. Mr Hitchcock, the District Superintendent of Police, was there with a big contingent of police. We drove straight to the Congress office at Chalapuram. Madhavan Nair's residence was temporarily made use of as the Congress office. Mr Hitchcock told us his version of the story and local leaders also gave us a full account of the happenings at Calicut since the prohibitory order was passed. Rajagopalachari stayed with me for two days and then left for Madras putting me in charge as Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee. I announced the suspension of my practice and took up the organisation work of the Congress.

Fortunately, we had at that time quite a number of lawyers who, suspending their practice, became full-time Congress workers. P. Achuthan, K. V. Gopala Menon, P. Ramunni Menon, K. Kesavan Nair, A. Karunakara Menon and T. V. Sundara Iyer were some of them. We had also some enthusiastic student non-cooperators who helped a lot in our

daily work. M. Gopala Menon, T. V. Chathukkutty Nair, Kurur Neelakandhan Nambudiripad, P. Sekhara Menon, M. Mathunni, to mention only a few. For the first few weeks I was fully occupied with the organisation of Congress Committees in different parts of Malabar. Though Congress work in the then native states of Cochin and Travancore was not possible to the same extent as in British Malabar, Committees were also formed in places like Trichur, Ernakulam, Quilon, Alleppey and Trivandrum.

The Congress office in Calicut was very well organised. Rajagopalachari and Hakim Ajmal Khan of Delhi who visited the office subsequently paid us very high compliments on the methodical way in which the work was done and records kept.

We decided to organise the first Kerala Provincial Conference at Ottappalam. P. Ramunni Menon who was then practising at Ottappalam suspended his practice and became a full-time worker. He was an ardent patriot, an enthusiastic worker and a capable organiser. I used to go to Ottappalam frequently to see the arrangements for the conference, which was to be held there in April 1921. Delegates from all parts of Kerala assembled there in large numbers. T. Prakasam, a prominent leader of that time, was the President of the Congress. L. A. Subbarama Iyer was the Chairman of the Reception Committee.

Along with the political conference, a Khilafat Conference was also held, presided over by Marthusa Sahib of Tiruchirappalli. We also organised a Students' Conference over which George Joseph presided. Ottappalam became very lively with the presence of delegates, visitors and volunteers. A large police force was stationed there to be ready for any unexpected developments. The crowd was very orderly, even though the police gave them much provocation. The shouting of slogans, the singing of national songs and the boundless enthusiasm of the people irritated the police. Some volunteers were beaten, and even Ramunni Menon was ill-treated. There was merciless beating by the police of many volunteers and workers. Even before the conference formally ended, many people left the place fearing ill-treatment by the police. A committee consisting of Prakasam, Subbarama Iyer, Marthusa Sahib, George Joseph and the writer was formed to

enquire into the atrocities committed by the police and submit a formal report. This was done without delay and the committee unanimously came to the conclusion that the police under the order of the Superintendent of Police, Mr Hitchcock, attacked and injured many people without any provocation, and appealed to the Government to take action.

Madhavan Nair, U. Gopala Menon, Yaqub Hasan and Moideen Koya were released from the Cannanore jail on August 21, 1921 Yaqub Hasan went straight to Madras. The other three patriots were given a rousing reception on their arrival in Calicut. A huge procession was organised to take the leaders through different parts of the town. Arches were erected at important junctions and the whole town was decorated in honour of the occasion. Two days after, we settled down to normal work. I told them of the growing restlessness in Ernad and other places. We decided to do whatever we could to instil confidence in the people. Madhavan Nair accordingly went to Manjeri, his home town.

New Congress and Khilafat Committees were springing up. The police did not like the idea of the Muslims organising themselves as Khilafat Committees. They occasionally clashed with the Khilafat workers. I had been receiving reports from Congress workers that the situation in Ernad was causing anxiety.

M. P. Narayana Menon, who was the Secretary of the Ernad Congress Committee, wanted me to visit some parts of Ernad without delay and persuade the Khilafat workers not to be restless. I went there more than once and met leaders like Ali Musaliar, Lavakutty, Kunhalan and advised them to restrain themselves.

One day at about 10.00 p.m. the Secretary of the Khilafat Committee, Abdul Rahiman, came to the Congress office and informed me that the Collector, Mr Thomas, and the District Superintendent of Police, Mr Hitchcock, had gone to an unknown destination by train with a large contingent of police. He added that I should start for Ernad to induce the Congress and Khilafat workers to surrender to the police in case they attempted to arrest them. I suggested there was no use starting at that time and would wait till morning to find out what had happened.

Mr Thomas and Mr Hitchkock with the police force had gone to Tirurangadi, a great Moplah centre, which is about fifty km from Calicut, and arrested many people. That caused panic. Many went to the mosque and took shelter there. Rumours began to spread rapidly that the police entered the mosque and took away those inside. Before dawn large numbers of Muslims from neighbouring places like Thanoor, Tirur and Parappanangadi came to Tirurangadi and demanded the release of the arrested persons. The police asked them to sit down, which they did. Then instead of trying to pacify them, the police opened fire. Some died and many were wounded. This treacherous act on the part of the police induced the crowd to collect whatever weapons they could find and attack the police. They destroyed public offices, cut telegraphic wires, collected arms wherever they could find them and destroyed the railway lines. For sheer safety the police had to run away. They took shelter in the night in the police station which was heavily guarded and made their retreat to Calicut early next morning, continuously firing away to keep away the mob.

News of the happenings at Tirurangadi reached Calicut, and the Congress office was crowded with visitors making anxious enquiries about the situation in Ernad. Early next morning I started for Tirurangadi in a motor car with Moidu Moulavi, U. Gopala Menon and T. V. Chathukkutty Nair. When we reached Kondotti, which is a great Moplah centre, we learnt that rebels were already moving from Tirurangadi to Manjeri, the taluk headquarters. So we decided to go to Manjeri to persuade the rebels to go back. On proceeding a few yards we found it was impossible to continue our journey. The small bridges were destroyed, trees were cut and put across the roads. This made it difficult for any traffic to move. So we returned to Kondotti, left our car there and started our journey to Tirurangadi on foot. There were small crowds assembled in different parts on our way. When we reached Tirurangadi a huge crowd of Moplahs met us. Facing the crowd, standing on the verandah of a house I appealed to them to put restraint on themselves and see that violence did not spread. We returned to Calicut at about mid-night. By that time, martial law was proclaimed in Ernad, Calicut and the neighbouring places. The next day I wrote a letter to the District Collector, Calicut, requesting him for permission to go to the rebel area

with twenty-four Congress workers to see what we could do to persuade the rebels to come back to their senses. The Collector after consulting the military authorities gave us necessary permission. Early morning on August 21, 1921, we started in six horse-carriages. When we reached a few yards away from Feroke bridge, we got down from the carriages. I then went to see the officer-in-charge of the military guarding the bridge and showed him the Collector's letter. The permission was granted for us to proceed to Ernad. We sent back the carriages to Calicut and started for Tirurangadi on foot, marching like an Army of Peace in khaddar shirts and Gandhi caps. U. Gopala Menon, K. V. Gopala Menon, Moidu Moulavi and K. Madhava Menon were some of those who were with us then. We sent word to Ali Musaliar who was the unquestioned leader of the rebels about our visit to Tirurangadi. By the time we reached Mampurath ferry, about two hundred volunteers were there to receive us with boats. They were fully armed. Kunhalavi was the head of the army and Lavakutty was the minister of Ali Musaliar. They conducted us to the Khilafat office. I asked my friends to stay behind. I went up with Moidu Moulavi and Gopala Menon and awaited the arrival of Ali Musaliar whose headquarters was the Tirurangadi mosque. A few minutes later, Ali Musaliar arrived with pomp and splendour. He embraced me and sat by my side for a few minutes without saying anything. Then he gave me a full account of the happenings. After listening to him for a few minutes, I asked him what he proposed to do in future. He asked for my advice. I told him frankly that it would be better for the more prominent rebel leaders to surrender to the military to save Tirurangadi from disaster. He was unable to make a decision. He asked me to consult Lavakutty and Kunhalavi. It was getting dark. Friends who were waiting downstairs were getting uneasy. I bade farewell to Ali Musaliar. When I left him I had a talk with Lavakutty and Kunhalavi. Kunhalavi was a strong and sturdy man with a sword in one hand and another hanging from his shoulder. He had several cuts on his body. He plainly told me that he would never surrender to the military and that he would rather die fighting like a man. And that was what happened subsequently. There was an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty. We left the place at about 8 o'clock in the evening.

crossed the river and spent the night in a Muslim house. We started back early morning and reached Calicut before twilight.

The situation grew uncontrollable. Rebel leaders sprang up in different parts of Ernad and Ponnani and played havoc. Hundreds of refugees were coming to Calicut, so we concentrated our attention on giving them food and shelter. Mahatma Gandhi helped us a lot by collecting money for relief work. For about six weeks the rebels ruled the area. Then the military terror commenced. There were a number of pitched battles in different parts of Ernad and Ponnani. Special mention must be made of a horrible tragedy which took place at this time. About 90 prisoners were being taken from Tirur to Coimbatore in a closed wagon without any ventilation. When the wagon was opened at Podanur, it was found that only a few of them were alive. Sixty-four were dead. When news of this cruel treatment of the prisoners appeared in the Madras papers, the military had no explanation to give.

The rebellion lasted for over six months. It is estimated that as a result of the rebellion about ten thousand people had lost their lives. Many innocent people were convicted by the Military Court. Among them was M. P. Narayana Menon, who tried his best to restrain the rebels but was charged with the offence of treason, and sentenced to fourteen years' rigorous imprisonment.

The Congress workers found themselves in a very unenviable position when the rebellion ended. They were hated by the authorities, looked on with suspicion by the Muslims and disliked by others. In this atmosphere of fear and frustration, they waited for improvement of the situation to commence any new work. Some of us availed ourselves of this opportunity to start a newspaper to popularise the ideals and programme of the Congress. Accordingly, Mathrubhumi Printing & Publishing Co Ltd was registered on February 15, 1922 with a capital of one lakh of rupees divided into twenty thousand shares of Rs 5 each. When we collected Rs 10,000 we decided to publish *Mathrubhumi*, the first issue of which came out on March 17, 1923. It was first published as a tri-weekly. I took up the editorship and it soon became a popular paper. Forty-eight years have passed since this paper was started. Step by

step *Mathrubhumi* rose in circulation and importance. The influence which it wields and the prestige it has acquired are something unique. I am still connected with it as its Chief Editor.

Soon after the rebellion I was served with a notice not 'to leave the Calicut Municipality limits for a definite period without the permission of the District Magistrate. When I heard of the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi in March 1922 and his impending trial at Ahmedabad, I decided to go there to witness his trial. I feared that the District Magistrate might serve notice on me again not to leave the municipal limits without his permission. So I left Calicut in a cargo boat for Bombay, and from there I went to Ahmedabad. I saw Mahatma Gandhi the next day after my arrival there. He was then detained in the Sabarmati prison.

The trial of Mahatma Gandhi which took place at the Circuit House, Ahmedabad was a historic occasion. Elaborate police and military arrangements were made by the Government to meet any unexpected developments. Leaders from different parts of India were there to witness the trial. After the trial and before he was taken to the prison, Mahatma Gandhi had a few words to say to every one of the leaders who were present there. When my turn came, he told me about the arrangements he had made regarding some personal matters relating to me. I admired his consideration for others when he had so many important things to attend to.

The second Kerala Provincial Congress was held in Palghat in April 1923. Mrs Sarojini Naidu presided over the conference. She was my guest during her stay in Palghat. Since it was the first conference after the Malabar rebellion, some leaders had come from Madras and North India. Devadas Gandhi, C. Rajagopalachari, Bi Amma, the mother of the Ali brothers, were some of the leaders present on the occasion. The conference helped to shake off the lethargy which followed the rebellion. After the conference I took Mrs Naidu to Calicut where she addressed a large public meeting. I gave her a full account of the atrocities committed by the military during the rebellion. On her way to Bombay she stopped at Madras for a day and addressed a public meeting there. In

the course of her speech she gave an account of the horrors committed by the military in Ernad and other places. Next day the Madras Government came out with a communique stating that the allegations made by Mrs Sarojini Naidu against the military were absolutely unfounded, and threatened to prosecute her in case she did not withdraw her allegations. When I read this in *The Hindu*, I published a statement in that paper the following day. I said that the speech made by Mrs Naidu at the Madras beach was based on facts supplied by me and if they were false it was I who ought to be prosecuted and not Mrs Naidu. I also gave two statements of victims of military atrocities — one a pregnant Muslim woman who was bayoneted and the other a Muslim boy of eleven whose left hand was cut off. Their photos were also published in corroboration of the statements. The Government had no answer to make.

After the Cocanada Congress in 1923, the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee decided to take up untouchability work. A small sub-committee was appointed to make arrangements to carry on effective propaganda against untouchability in Cochin and Travancore. Malabar for the time being was left out, as the atmosphere there was not quite suitable for any active public work. A. K. Pillai, an enthusiastic and capable public worker, was in charge of the tour programme of a delegation consisting of Kurur Nambudiripad, K. Kelappan, T. K. Madhavan and the writer. Pillai himself was a member of the delegation. We toured different parts of Travancore and Cochin for twenty-four days addressing three or four public meetings a day. We received enthusiastic reception wherever we went. When we reached Vaikom, I addressed a huge public meeting. There is a famous temple in Vaikom. We were told that the so-called untouchables were not allowed to walk along the public road near the temple, while Muslims and Christians used it freely without any obstruction. I exhorted the audience to take up this cause and organise a procession along the prohibited place with the untouchables. All approved of the proposal and it was decided to take the untouchables along the prohibited road next morning.

After the meeting when I returned to the Travellers' Bungalow, the District Magistrate, some police officers and some

prominent citizens of the locality met and advised me not to conduct the procession as planned. They feared there would be bloodshed. It was suggested that we should carry on propaganda against untouchability for a month and create a congenial atmosphere for the untouchables to pass along the prohibited road without obstruction from the higher castes. I accepted the advice and postponed the intended programme for a month.

We utilised this time for holding public meetings in Vaikom and other places in favour of the removal of untouchability. Finally we decided to commence satyagraha on March 30. Before that I wrote a detailed letter to Mahatma Gandhi, stating the circumstances under which we had decided to start satyagraha and asking for his permission to start it and blessings for its success. He gave his permission as requested. Elaborate arrangements were made to keep the satyagraha strictly non-violent. On March 30, 1924 one high-caste man and two untouchables started along the prohibited road. They were stopped by the police when they reached a point. The police said that the high-caste man could go if he liked, but the other two could not. They insisted on proceeding and all three of them were arrested. Subsequently, they were taken to a Magistrate who convicted them to six months' simple imprisonment.

Satyagraha continued like that for three or four days. Its success and its peaceful nature irritated the conservative elements. There were rumours that the high-caste men were making arrangements to create trouble and to attack the satyagrahis. So we suspended satyagraha for a few days and utilised the time in meeting the orthodox elements who were strongly against allowing the untouchables to pass that way. They were not prepared for any concession. So, we restarted the satyagraha. T. K. Madhavan and I were the satyagrahis on that day. We were arrested and taken to a Magistrate who after trials, in which we refused to take any part, sentenced us to six months' simple imprisonment. We were then taken to the Central Jail at Trivandrum. By this time the Vaikom satyagraha attracted the attention of the whole of India, and help came from all parts of India. Satyagrahis were very well treated in the Trivandrum prison. But, some of us were given

special treatment, while others were put in the ordinary prison. We objected to this. I wrote a letter to the Government stating that unless all satyagraha prisoners were given the same treatment, we who were enjoying special advantages would refuse to take them any longer. The Government wisely accepted our request and brought all the other satyagraha prisoners to where we were and we lived together like a happy family.

Four months later, the Maharaja of Travancore passed away and since his successor was a minor, the Maharani became the Regent. All the satyagraha prisoners were released on this occasion.

A few weeks after this, a big Savarna jatha started from Vaikom to Trivandrum to present a petition signed by thousands to the Maharani Regent praying for the removal of untouchability. Mahatma Gandhi visited Vaikom twice. The satyagraha ended in complete victory. The story of the Vaikom satyagraha will always be remembered as one of the proudest chapters in the history of the non-cooperation movement.

Epic Years

APPASAHEB PATWARDHAN

IN ORDER TO comprehend correctly the non-cooperation movement, we must trace its gradual development out of the hearty co-operation that Gandhiji habitually offered to the British Government, out of the recruiting campaign undertaken by Gandhiji in 1918 and the Rowlatt Act satyagraha launched by him next year. Gandhiji's innate love of truth prompted him to be honest and straightforward in all his dealings including politics. He said, "So long as we accept the British domination, let us do it frankly and without reservations." He, therefore, participated in the war efforts of the British Government during World War I (1914-18) and persuaded the peasants of Kheda district to enroll themselves into the British Army. He also appealed to the students of the Bombay University to enroll themselves as volunteers in the Bombay University Corps of the Indian Defence Force, started to give military training to Indian students. I myself had the privilege of undergoing three months' military training including shooting practice. The British Government at that time used to hold out high hopes to the Indian people that after the successful termination of the war, the British would look towards India through "a changed angle of vision" not as a large Dependency but as an equal partner in the British Empire. But to Gandhiji's utter dismay the Government instead enacted the Rowlatt Act designed to put down likely revolt among discharged Indian soldiers.

Gandhiji immediately proclaimed an India-wide satyagraha campaign in protest against the "Black Act" and issued an appeal to the citizens of India to enroll themselves as satyagrahis. Just at that time I was due to appear for the M.A. Examination of the Bombay University. I was over-powered by Gandhiji's fervent appeal. I somehow finished my last paper and enrolled myself as a satyagrahi the same evening.

But the nation had had no training in non-violence. There were widespread riots, and Gandhiji had to recall the satyagraha before I could reach Bombay to participate in the struggle.

The Government on its part was courteous and mild enough towards Gandhiji personally but committed wholesale massacre of innocent citizens at Amritsar, proclaimed martial law throughout the Punjab and sought to suppress even Press criticism by inordinate punishment. The public of the Punjab in their anguish appealed to Gandhiji to rush to their help but the martial law regime there expressly prohibited Gandhiji's entry into the Punjab.

Gandhiji then prepared to disregard the ban and tried to enter the Punjab at the risk of life along with a band of associates prepared to receive smilingly military bullets in the pursuit of the cause. The occasion creates the courage and I immediately offered myself. After close scrutiny Gandhiji accepted my offer. That is how I came into close contact with Gandhiji.

But in deference to the unanimous advice of eminent Liberal friends all over India and on second thoughts, Gandhiji preferred to postpone the struggle for the time being.

Gandhiji had just then undertaken to edit the weekly, *Young India*, as the organ of his movement. Mahadevbhai Desai, who had been working as Gandhiji's Personal Secretary, was now given the additional duty of helping Gandhiji in editing and publishing *Young India*. The double duty was too much for him. So at his instance Gandhiji desired me to stay with him as an additional Secretary. I readily accepted and for months worked in both the capacities. But Gandhiji claimed to be—and really was—"a hard task-master". Besides, the night-long vigils that I had to undergo for the proof-correction in the dingy printing press itself of the columns of *Young India*, on the nights preceding the morning fixed for its publication were too taxing for me. So Gandhiji admitted me to his own Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati.

I joined the Ashram in September 1919. Gandhiji had at that time been developing in his mind the scheme of non-cooperation with the British Government. The Government had appointed the Hunter Committee to report on the satya-graha movement and Government measures to counteract it. It was evident that the Committee would simply justify Government measures and exaggerate public excesses. So Gandhiji boycotted the Committee's enquiry, and instead appointed a people's enquiry committee manned by eminent Indian jurists like Barrister Jayakar, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das and Vithalbhai Patel. That committee exposed the excesses on both sides but proved Government excesses to be far beyond the needs of the situation. The committee insisted on suitable amends, but the Government was adamant. Gandhiji then persuaded the leaders of the committee to suspend their thriving practice in Government courts as a protest against Government high-handedness. He personally returned his own Kaiser-i-Hind gold medal endowed by the Government in appreciation of his splendid work in South Africa, and appealed to the general public also to adopt similar measures. So far as I remember, Sir Rabindranath Tagore was the first to respond by renouncing his knighthood. That was the beginning of the non-cooperation movement.

A special session of the Indian National Congress held at under the presidentship of Abbas Tyabji, an ex-judge of Baroda. It passed a unanimous resolution calling upon (i) the classes of Gujarat in particular to renounce Government titles; (ii) lawyers to suspend their practice in Government courts; (iii) students to leave Government schools and colleges, and attend national institutions if and where they could be established; (iv) voters to boycott the then ensuing General Elections—the first of their kind in British India.

A special session of the Indian National Congress held at Calcutta adopted a similar resolution, and the annual session at Nagpur at the close of 1920 reiterated the same in a stiffer form.

It may thus be noted that the non-cooperation movement

really commenced in 1920 though it expanded and attracted worldwide attention in 1921.

Gandhiji had intended to proclaim his scheme of non-cooperation on August 1, 1920. But on that very day an event happened that gave a new outlook to Gandhiji: Lokamanya Tilak died after a brief illness in Sardargriha Lodge, Bombay, his usual resort during his visits to Bombay. And his funeral procession, which was attended by hundreds of thousands of people from Bombay and hundreds of miles around, was a striking experience for Gandhiji. It demonstrated to him the deep impression that the Lokamanya's message of swaraj had made on the popular mind. In his heart of hearts Gandhiji had designed his non-cooperation with the foreign rulers as a programme for the attainment of swaraj, but the unprecedented scenes of August 1 emboldened him to link publicly non-cooperation with swaraj. "Swaraj in one year" was now Gandhiji's inspiring message to the nation. "Let us heartily execute the non-cooperation programme, paralyse the foreign despotic Government and prevail upon it to yield swaraj. Let us celebrate the first anniversary of the Lokamanya's demise in Free India." The message immediately caught the imagination of the nation, and the years 1920-21 became years of intense activity both for Gandhiji and the whole nation.

Non-cooperation was only the negative side of the programme. The positive, and to Gandhiji's mind, the more important side was more active and vital mutual trust and co-operation among citizens.

With a view to creating that trust, Gandhiji undertook a thorough renovation of the Indian National Congress whereof the leadership naturally came into his hands. In order that the business of the Congress be conducted in people's own languages instead of English as heretofore, he framed a new constitution. The country was divided into linguistic provinces and each province had its own Provincial Congress Committee with District and Tehsil Committees below. And Gandhiji gave to the nation the very enchanting and thrilling call to enroll a total of one crore members within three months, each member, paying an annual subscription of

four annas only. Gandhiji immediately followed it up by the introduction of twenty lakh spinning-wheels in as many homes, assigned suitable quotas to respective provinces and recommended hand-spun, hand-woven khaddar as the "livery of India's freedom". This was further reinforced by the collection of Rs. one crore as Tilak Swaraj Fund, the total abolition of untouchability and the establishment of Hindu-Muslim unity, including unity of Parsis, Christians, Jews and all—and all this was to be completed within three months. Gandhiji applied himself to the task with exemplary devotion and his example was contagious. The numerical portion of the "constructive programme" framed by the All India Congress Committee in March 1921 was in fact completed by the nation by the close of June. The achievement raised the self-confidence of the nation. Thousands of national schools, scores of colleges, half a dozen "Tilak Universities" and hundreds of khadi production centres sprang up throughout the length and breadth of India. The Congress grew into a parallel Government of India. Scores of volunteer organisations, each hundreds strong, also raised their heads here and there. All this was an eye sore to the foreign Government and the whole atmosphere was tense.

A trial of strength came about on the occasion of the arrival in Bombay of the Prince of Wales whom the Government wanted to parade over India professedly to inaugurate the Morley-Minto reforms, consisting of a cautious and halting liberalisation of the franchise, providing for non-official members' election to the provincial and central legislative councils, but really to work up a demonstration of India's loyalty to the British Crown. The Congress had already proclaimed total boycott of the elections. With equal vigour it also boycotted the welcome to the royal guest and achieved spectacular success. The self-confidence and enthusiasm of the people knew no bounds. The volunteer organisations were so many nurseries of civil disobedience. Gandhiji on his part declared his daring plan to proclaim on behalf of the Bardoli taluka independence from British rule by the end of the year.

But destiny had willed otherwise. The epic years passed without any signs of swaraj coming. Popular enthusiasm

naturally suffered a set-back. The Government immediately snatched the opportunity to arrest and prosecute Gandhiji on a charge of sedition and sentenced him to six years' rigorous imprisonment. That meant a temporary close of the non-cooperation movement.

• Throughout these momentous years of 1919-21, I along with many an esteemed associate remained engaged in spinning, weaving and teaching the boys and girls in Gandhiji's Ashram and for some time the non-cooperating collegians in the Gujarat Vidyapith. Gandhiji wanted us to be his reserve force. At the close of 1921, I returned to my own district of Ratnagiri with the permission and blessings of Gandhiji to work there according to directions and guidance received from him.

Summoning Remembrance of Things Past

K. SANTHANAM

I SAW MAHATMA GANDHI only in 1920. He had come to Madras two or three times before, but I was very much absorbed in my studies and was not interested in politics or public life. In 1919 some of my friends organised a League of Youth and on their invitation I joined it. We discussed current political questions, though even then my interest was largely academic.

When Gandhiji announced his non-cooperation programme at Bombay on the eve of the Lokamanya's death, I was excited, but was at the same time very sceptical. I thought that the four-fold boycott was not likely to meet with much response and if unexpectedly the boycott of schools and colleges and courts and services were successful, the British Government might come to an end, but the result would be only chaos and not any kind of orderly freedom. He then came to Madras in the early part of August 1920.

When I listened to his great speech at the Triplicane beach, I was swept off my feet but my doubts remained. Next day, there was a meeting at the Khilafat office in Madras, at which many leading personalities like Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, G. A. Natesan, Yaqub Hasan and Rajaji were present. As it was open to all who cared to attend, I went to the meeting with some friends, who were equally interested in the non-cooperation movement. Gandhiji explained his programme in his usual brief manner with such intensity of conviction that when he finished and asked for questions, there was only hushed silence. I ventured to break the silence and asked him whether he actually expected large numbers of students, lawyers and Government servants to boycott schools, courts and offices. I could see the disapproval in the eyes of the elders present who should have considered me as an impudent young man but there was no disapproval in Gandhiji's eyes and he replied seriously and calmly.

I cannot now recall the exact words but his reply was to the following effect: "I do not know. It would be as God wills, but I am sure of two things. If there is sufficient response, the British will come down and we shall succeed in achieving our ends. In any case, there is nothing impracticable for any individual person to accept the programme. For instance, barring your own disinclination, what is the difficulty for you who have not yet even started practice of law to give up the idea and join the movement?" So far as I was concerned, this settled the matter and this was the case with some of my friends also.

Later the same day, some of us met and decided to join the non-cooperation movement. We went to Gandhiji and communicated our decision. He would not accept it. He said that if after seven days, we were of the same opinion, he would gladly take us. Rajaji, who believed in our earnestness, invited us to accompany Gandhiji's party on their tour in Malabar. The party travelled in a third-class compartment and this gave me a good opportunity to observe Gandhiji. It was then that I became convinced that he stood apart from all contemporary leaders and belonged to the race of old rishis and prophets, of whom our Puranas are full. His every movement and every word were natural but they were so precise and restrained that not a gesture or word was wasted. He shaved himself with an ordinary razor in the moving train without any mirror. During meal-time workers brought him goat's milk. Maulana Shaukat Ali was travelling with him and they brought him chunks of red meat. Having been brought up in an orthodox South Indian Vaishnavite family, I had never seen people eating meat and so I was horrified. I immediately moved to the farthest corner. Gandhiji saw this and smiled. A wag near us whispered: "They buy the goat, give the milk to the Mahatma and its meat to the Big Brother." That was only a joke.

At every station, huge crowds gathered even at nights but Gandhiji continued to sleep at stated times and neither the noise of the train nor the shouts of the crowd could wake him up.

I remember vividly only our halts at Calicut and Mangalore. We reached the former on an evening. We were all lodged at the house of a prosperous Gujarati merchant who gave us a royal feast. While we were eating, Gandhiji walked through the

rows of workers who had various dishes on plantain leaves. He laughed and said: "Oh, this is how you are getting ready for the great fight!"

At Calicut and Mangalore, the people were simply delirious. Particularly, the Muslims were simply amazed that Gandhiji should have come forward to lead the Khilafat movement. When he returned to Madras, S. Ramanathan, K. Rajagopalan and I went to Gandhiji and told him that our decision to join the non-cooperation movement stood firm. He was greatly pleased and welcomed us and said that he hoped we would prove to be true soldiers. He exhorted us particularly to take to khadi work.

After Gandhiji left, we began to work at the Khilafat office in Madras. Rajaji was our leader. In those days, Rajaji was worshipped by all those who were in sympathy with the new movement inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi. He was no less bitterly disliked by those opposed to the movement. Our immediate task was to prepare for the special Congress session which was to meet at Calcutta in September. Gandhiji did not wait for the approval of the Congress before he launched his movement of non-cooperation. He was prepared to carry it through on behalf of the Khilafat Committee. But he was politician enough to realise that the movement would get a great inspiration if it was adopted by the Congress and became a national movement.

With his usual thoroughness, Rajaji set about gathering delegates to the special Congress session from all districts. The lawyers who had suspended practice and the senior students who had boycotted their colleges were obvious delegates. Influential Muslims who had joined the Khilafat Committee were also ready to go to Calcutta but Rajaji was even more anxious to get those who could not join the non-cooperation movement for various reasons but yet who were sympathisers and indirect helpers. He was able to gather more than 200 delegates who were fairly representative of entire Tamil Nadu. A special train was arranged for them and at Calcutta, they all stayed at the Delegates' Camp.

The Congress was a very loose organisation in those days. There was no special provision for election of delegates. Anyone

who was prepared to pay Rs 10 as delegate's fee and incurred the necessary expenditure for going to the place where the Congress session was held and meet the food charges became automatically a delegate. A day or two before the Congress session, these delegates met and elected the members of the Subjects Committee who discussed and decided the resolutions to be brought before the session. Every province was allotted a certain number of members for the Subjects Committee in accordance with its population. Our quota was about 25. When we reached Calcutta, we learnt that all the then prominent political leaders were ranged against Gandhi and his non-cooperation movement. Jinnah from Bombay, Lala Lajpat Rai from the Punjab, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Malaviya from U.P., Chittaranjan Das from Calcutta, A. Rangaswami Iyengar and Satyamurthi from Madras were the leaders of the opposition. There were a few persons who had accompanied Rangaswami Iyengar and Satyamurthi from Madras but at Calcutta they were able to gather a large number of Madrasis who were employed in the firms and factories there. They were given the delegate's fee and enrolled as delegates so that when we met to elect the Subjects Committee, we were dismayed to find a large number of these South Indians attending our meeting. When we approached them and enquired why they should have volunteered to oppose the great freedom movement, many of them were confused and said that they merely wanted to attend the Congress session. Some of them quietly slipped away and others did not vote. Rajaji had prepared a list of candidates for the Subjects Committee from our camp. It was printed on green paper. Similarly Rangaswami Iyengar and Satyamurthi had printed their own list on white paper. Many of the Muslims in our camp could not read the lists in English but whenever a name was proposed and seconded, they would merely ask, "Is it the green or white list?" When they were told it was green, they would raise their hands and they would keep quiet when it was white. Our list was accepted in toto. S. Srinivasa Iyengar, who was then Advocate General and who later resigned his office and became a prominent Congress leader, was also there to witness the proceedings. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Editor of *The Hindu*, was undecided as to whether he should oppose Gandhiji or not.

When the Subjects Committee met, Gandhiji had given in-

structions that no one on our side should speak and that he would be the sole spokesman. He proposed the non-cooperation resolution. It was bitterly opposed by all the big leaders but it was supported by an overwhelming majority in the Subjects Committee. There was still some doubt whether a similar majority would be available in the open session as it was said that a large number of delegates had come from U.P. and Bengal who would vote according to the instructions of Pandit Motilal Nehru and Chittaranjan Das. It was therefore a great and agreeable surprise to us when Pandit Motilal Nehru suddenly changed his views and decided to support Gandhiji. We were told that the main cause for the change was young Jawaharlal Nehru who had become from the beginning an ardent supporter of Gandhiji. Motilal Nehru was a strong-willed man but his affection for Jawaharlal and his great regard for Gandhiji and the marvellous exposition of the non-cooperation movement by Gandhiji in his speeches, all combined to induce him to come over to our side. This decided the issue for the open session. The opposing leaders made eloquent speeches but they fell on deaf ears. It was only when Jinnah mentioned "Mr Gandhi" that there was an uproar and a demand that he should say "Mahatma Gandhi" but Gandhi sternly rebuked the audience and told them that he himself disliked the title and it would be altogether wrong and foolish to compel others to use it. The resolution on non-cooperation was long but it was essentially a resolution for action. It called upon title-holders to renounce their titles, lawyers to boycott the courts, students to boycott schools and colleges and all persons to boycott foreign cloth and adopt spinning. Though Gandhiji did not quite like it, the attainment of swaraj was added to it in addition to restoration of the Khilafat and redress for the Punjab atrocities. The resolution called upon the people to boycott the elections under the new Indian Reforms Act of 1919.

Our immediate task after returning from the Calcutta session was to organise the boycott of elections. We carried on an intense propaganda from street to street in the City of Madras. S. Ramanathan who was in charge of publicity managed to print big and attractive posters and had them pasted all over the city. By the time the elections were over, we had to attend the Nag-

pur Congress which was presided over by C. Vijayaraghavachariar who was a great lawyer and constitutionalist. Just before the session, Chittaranjan Das came over to the side of Gandhiji and Lala Lajpat Rai also did so. Therefore there was little controversy there and an expanded non-cooperation resolution which gave the first place to the attainment of swaraj and which added additional items of constructive programme was passed practically unanimously.

After return from the Nagpur Congress, I was thinking what I should do. A large number of students in the Aligarh Muslim University had responded to the call for the boycott of Government and aided colleges. As their number was about 150, it was decided by the Ali brothers in consultation with Gandhiji to establish a rival institution called Jamia Millia to provide an opportunity to those students to finish their education before they plunged in national service. A call was made for lecturers in the new college. I thought it was a good opportunity to serve the cause of national education. My friends K. G. Subramaniam and G. V. Kripalani who had also completed the law course and enrolled themselves in the High Court and non-cooperated were willing to join and the applications of all the three of us were promptly accepted. So we proceeded to Aligarh via Delhi early in 1921. We were warmly welcomed and lodged in the house of Khwaja who was a leading zamindar and prominent leader of the All-India Khilafat Committee. Arrangements were made for provision of vegetarian food for us.

The new National College was housed in a spacious bungalow and we found the students intelligent and patriotic. Dr Zakir Husain who had just taken his degree from the Aligarh University was also a member of the staff. I began to brush up my mathematics and teach the students that subject. Subramaniam taught history and Kripalani English literature. We were paid Rs 150 a month with which we were quite satisfied.

While we were satisfied with the college students and other matters, we found that the Ali brothers whose word was supreme in the conduct of the institution did not take the experiment seriously. They came to the college a few times and every time they told the students that their education in the college was a minor formality and they should as soon as possible take

up political propaganda and constructive work. This produced considerable indifference and discontent among the students. We felt that it was not worthwhile coming all this long distance and waste our time at Aligarh under such conditions and so we left after three months.

Soon after I returned from Aligarh, there was an urgent request from my friend S. Ramanathan who had started khadi work at Kallakurichi in the South Arcot district to relieve him for a short time as he had other urgent work to attend to. So I went to Kallakurichi and began to learn the rudiments of khadi work. There were old spinners and carders in the villages near Kallakurichi and local cotton was available. There were also local weavers. So the production of khadi was a comparatively easy affair but the living conditions there were very unsatisfactory. I could not get a room and I had to live in the khadi depot together with cotton and yarn. I used to bathe in the river near Kallakurichi early morning and take my food in a hotel. The food was poor and highly spiced with chillies. In those days, we were imbued with such a high spirit of service and sacrifice that these physical difficulties did not in any way discourage me. I was able to put up the khadi production there on a satisfactory footing and fortunately for me, a person who had been doing business in Burma returned to India and was willing to take over the khadi work from me. I got out just in time to attend the famous session of the Congress at Ahmedabad.

This session was, in my view, the most remarkable gathering of all Congress sessions, which I had the good fortune to attend. The spirit of sacrifice and dedication was almost complete. Gandhiji had wanted to make every detail of the arrangements for the lodging and boarding of delegates as agreeable and perfect as possible. Khadi-clad volunteers acted as scavengers. There was only one common mess at which the food was good and simple. At the A.I.C.C. meeting when Gandhiji moved the resolution to call upon the people of India to awake and achieve swaraj in one year, our enthusiasm knew no bounds. He visited every camp to meet the delegates and when he came to the Tamil Nadu camp, we asked him whether the slogan of swaraj in a year was not altogether visionary. He did not think so. At that time, he really felt that if he could conduct the

total satyagraha as contemplated in the resolution in Bardoli the effect on the rest of the country and the whole world would be such as to compel the British Government to come to an immediate settlement. While our minds were still unconvinced, we could not but be inspired by the flaming conviction of Gandhiji and we resolved to offer our implicit loyalty to him. The plan was so simple. Throughout the country, the Congress workers were to maintain peace and engage in constructive work but they were to disregard all prohibitory orders which prevented them from proclaiming the message of freedom to the people at public meetings. Gandhiji with Vallabhbhai Patel and other co-workers was to prosecute the total mass satyagraha at Bardoli where taxes were not to be paid, all Government officials were to resign, and the entire administration to be taken over peacefully by the Congress organisation and its workers. Gandhiji thought that the British Government would have to resort to very extreme measures of repression including shooting and mass imprisonment and when they found that these had no effect and the example was likely to spread, they would have no alternative but to come to a settlement.

When I came back from the Ahmedabad Congress session, the headquarters of the Tamil Nadu Congress was at Tiruchirappalli and I joined that office. We arranged public meetings to explain the decision of the Ahmedabad Congress. As expected, the district authorities issued an order prohibiting meetings. It was decided to disobey the order and I was the very first speaker. My speech mainly pointed to the need to maintain absolute non-violence in spite of provocation by the police authorities and continued defiance of orders till they were revoked. As soon as I finished my speech, I was arrested and taken straight to the court of a Sub-Magistrate who was holding court specially for the purpose at about 8 in the evening. In accordance with our instructions, I put up no defence and pleaded guilty. To the question of the Magistrate as to the contents of my speech, the Police Inspector who gave evidence was highly embarrassed, as he did not want to say that its main burden was non-violence. He simply said that I had exhorted the people to defy orders. This was sufficient for the Magistrate who sentenced me to six months' imprisonment with hard labour. I was taken to the Trichi Central Jail and lodged in a

separate cell. Next morning when I awoke, I was given prison clothes and asked to fall into the routine of the prison by taking my place after washing, and to take rice gruel. It was entirely tasteless and after taking a spoon or two, I simply abandoned it. Then I was sent with a batch for breaking stones, where the warder asked me to sit and pretend to work. During the next few days, many others joined me, including R. Krishnamurthi who later became the editor of *Kalki* and a great Tamil writer and T. Sadasivam who is now the Managing Editor of the same weekly. There were also many Andhra patriots who had been brought to Trichi. In the room next to mine was lodged Kalluri Subba Rao from Rayalaseema. He was not burdened with all my scruples and managed to bring some money with him. Through warders he used to get sweets and beedis from outside, the usual terms being that the warder would take double the price and keep half of it to himself. The beedis were the special currency in the jail and with them any jail provision like oil, salt and spices could be obtained. He would press the sweets upon me and as in those days I felt starved all the time, I did take them consoling myself with the thought that I was not directly concerned with the manner in which they were obtained.

Soon the Superintendent took a liking for me as I made no requests, caused no trouble and spent all my spare time in reading. It was reported to him that I was not eating my food on account of distaste for onions which were not used in orthodox Vaishnavite homes in Tamil Nadu. When he came to visit our block, he told me that onions were very good for health and that I was foolish to object to them. I told him that whether good or bad, I could not stand their smell. He ordered that a special soup without onions should be given to me and from that time, I had no more trouble about food though it was generally unpalatable and there were unceasing complaints from my other satyagrahi jail-mates. I personally thought it was wrong and undignified to make such complaints but at the same time I did not regret the improvements made as a result of their complaints. Better vegetables began to be used in the soup. Though my term was for six months, it was reduced by two months on account of the representations of my friend, the late K. V. Rajagopalan who was my college mate throughout the seven years

in the Presidency College and Law College. He took the report of my speech to K. Srinivasa Iyengar, the famous lawyer who had been made Executive Councillor, and after perusal of the speech, he ordered my immediate release. I went to my village and soon after I attended the Gaya Congress where the no-changers led by Rajaji defeated the council entry move led by C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru but this turned out to be a pyrrhic victory as the Swaraj Party was formed and the Congressmen were split all over the country.

The political situation had changed radically during my imprisonment. While Gandhiji was preparing for the mass satyagraha at Bardoli, there was an outbreak of mass violence at Chauri Chaura in U.P. where many police constables were burnt in a police station and Gandhiji suspended the satyagraha movement immediately. This gave rise to bitter comment and dissatisfaction among all Congress workers in jail and outside. Taking advantage of these reactions, the Government prosecuted Gandhiji for sedition and in the famous trial at Ahmedabad where the judge and Gandhiji competed with each other in courtesy and goodwill, he was sentenced to six years' imprisonment though he was released two years later. A majority of workers and some prominent leaders like Rajaji, Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Patel stood by Gandhiji and they came to be called no-changers, while some other leaders like Deshbandhu Das and Motilal Nehru thinking that there was no further scope for satyagraha turned towards council entry as the only effective form of political activity.

My Reminiscences

T. N. SINGH

WE HAD HEARD OF Gandhiji in 1919 or even earlier. In the Champaran district of Bihar, a number of Englishmen were big indigo-planters. They had plantations of indigo or *neel*. Peasants had to plough their fields under stress of physical force. They could hardly earn their bread and for the rest they were like slaves. Gandhiji launched a satyagraha in Champaran in 1917 first to remove their hardships. At that time I may have been 12 or 13 years old. I read about Gandhiji and his work in the Hindi newspaper of Calcutta, the *Bangavasi*. I had listened to Gandhiji's lecture in the Banaras Hindu University in 1916. I am not able to forget that scene even till today. Malaviyaji had made very elaborate arrangements for laying the foundation-stone of the Banaras Hindu University. Big leaders, English officers and rajas and maharajas were present. Wearing a turban, Gandhiji looked like a peasant. He commenced to speak—he was saying how the poor of India were being exploited, how the money for the jewels worn by the rajas and maharajas was earned by them by sucking the blood of the poor. He made similar observations about the capitalists and he attacked the English as having started the exploitation of the poor. I liked what Gandhiji said. I shouted, "Gandhiji, go on, Gandhiji, go on." We kept shouting this same cry and the Englishmen, the rajas and maharajas, the Rai Bahadurs and the Khan Bahadurs—all vacated their chairs and walked away. Gandhiji saw that people were leaving. As we encouraged him, he went on talking. Then the Maharaja of Darbhanga, who was presiding, also left. He was a pillar of the British Empire. How could he tolerate bitter criticism of the English? The chair became vacant. We requested Gandhiji to continue his speech; he said he was a believer in maintaining discipline. As there was no one in the chair, he was concluding his speech. At that time the people who were left there were full of excitement. I was certainly

sorry that Gandhiji had stopped speaking. What did it matter if the rajas and maharajas had left? But Gandhiji's inclination to maintain discipline under any circumstances impressed us greatly. We returned home. But the lesson that Gandhiji taught us made a deep impress on our minds. Seeing him we felt that he was one from amongst us, not an outsider. I had seen Gokhale as also Bipin Chandra Pal. I had an opportunity in my childhood to see once even Surendranath Banerjea. Seeing them I felt that they belonged to some other world. They did not seem to be members of our family. But seeing Gandhiji, our first feeling was that he was a man like us and that he was our leader. This feeling was there at least in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

In 1919, Gandhiji began his satyagraha movement against the Rowlatt Act. He wrote an article in *Young India* for April 1919. I was 15 at that time and even then I used to understand a little English. He had written that people would commence the satyagraha on April 6 by observing a fast. All good things are begun by a fast and such other religious observances in this part of the country. In this way, Gandhiji invested satyagraha with a religious and moral sentiment which appealed to everyone's heart—at least in eastern Uttar Pradesh—and thousands who did not know what British rule was and why we should launch a movement against it obeyed Gandhiji. And thousands of people and I observed a fast in Banaras on April 13 and there was a hartal in the city. Next day we learned that thousands of people were killed in the Jallianwala Bagh. We felt that General Dyer was a huge demon. No sooner an agitation was launched than great repression was let loose and that must be inquired into. A meeting was held in Banaras in which I listened to Malaviyaji's speech. While speaking he did not gesticulate much, but used to stand erect and speak well. A turban on head, a folded length of cloth around his neck, the calm and collected figure spoke for an hour with a steady flow. He said we numbered 30 crores, while the Englishmen were a handful. What could they do with an army of ten, twenty or fifty thousand? They had merely mounted on our shoulders; if we only shook our shoulders, they would topple down. We had 60 crores of hands. If we meant it, we could cross the seas with our hands and reach

England. No one could stop us. I liked all he said. There was a hartal on April 13. Banaras was not a big town, it had at that time a population of from a lakh and a half to a lakh and three-quarters and there were one or two big markets also. All shops remained closed and many shopkeepers fasted too. It was a unique time and great was the enthusiasm.

Gandhiji was arrested but he was taken outside the Punjab and released. He said again that the agitation be launched and after an enquiry into the matter, the guilty be punished. The Hunter Committee sat and the great lawyer of the time, Jagat Narayan Mulla Sahib, made a great name. Every day the proceedings of the inquiry and depositions of witnesses used to appear in the papers. In this way, the 1919 hartal and satyagraha began with the Jallianwala Bagh.

I believe that it was Gandhiji who first created in our hearts pride for our civilisation and our history. We experienced for the first time the pride that we were great. In those days people had adopted the English attire. Gandhiji once again revived in the people faith in our old ways of living. Prior to this, we used to believe ourselves to be fallen people. Our feeling of pride awakened in us self-confidence that we too could do something. People heard and read of the success that attended Gandhiji's satyagraha in South Africa. Gandhiji certainly gave us self-respect and pride; simultaneously he created confidence in us that if we desired, we could remove the biggest power from here and wrest our independence.

I first met Gandhiji in the middle of 1920 when he defined the outline of the satyagraha movement at the special Congress of Calcutta. Thereafter he delivered a speech in a mammoth meeting held at the Town Hall in Banaras. There were such crowds that people listened to him, sitting on trees and from roofs of houses. Gandhiji said: "I desire that you non-cooperate with this satanic Government." Could anyone say this about the Government? That created a unique stir. As I remember that day, I wonder when I think whence power came into us at that time. We decided that we should do whatever Gandhiji asked us to and then we desired only this that if we could offer even an iota of co-operation in the attainment of freedom, we should positively do so. The desire to sacrifice

everything for it awakened in us. Gandhiji inspired us to think that it was our duty to non-cooperate with the British Government in every way but if we co-operated with it, it would be a sin. Although the words "sin" and "merit" are connected with religion, it was such divine inspiration that even the agnostics felt that they must do what this leader asked of them, even though it may cost them their lives.

Gandhiji said that the schools would have to be given up, practice of law would have to be relinquished, titles would have to be discarded and they would have to non-cooperate with all offices of the British. We left schools. I remember well that a very big procession was taken out and there were attempts from all sides—our headmaster also was trying—to see that no boys would go out. But it was decided initially only that I had to give up studies. Later on Lal Bahadur also came. Kripalaniji certainly urged us to participate in the movement. We had taken a vow a long time ago that we would serve our motherland. When I went home, my brother and all others were displeased with me. Mother too became very sad and she said that if I thought I would get bread here because there was some land, I was sadly mistaken, and that I would become good-for-nothing, useless. She said such things to me. They touched me. Thereafter I decided that I would not take even a pice from my house. There used to be an examination for scholarship for the eighth class. I had taken that and was receiving a scholarship of Rs. 6 per month. When I left the Harishchandra School, I received all at once Rs 36. Then we both, Lal Bahadur and I, decided to take part in the movement. He too was dependent on others. His relatives also tried a lot to dissuade him from the path, but he did not budge. Then both of us thought that we should remain in the Vidyapith only.

The Kashi Vidyapith had made a distinctive contribution to the non-cooperation movement. When we were studying at the Vidyapith, bands of us used to visit the villages of Banaras. Our teacher too used to do so. We used to say in the villages that people should not plant palm-trees and should fell those that were already there. Toddy must not be prepared nor wine. To ensure this we used to take solemn declarations from the people. We used to tell them to boycott foreign cloth. There was a third item too. Gandhiji had said

at that time that one crore of rupees should be raised for constructive work. It was designated the Tilak Swaraj Fund. We used to do this work also. Thus we began to complete the programme of the non-cooperation movement. Having formed ourselves into batches, we used to work in the villages during vacations. And mostly we used to serve the people and carry Gandhiji's message to them. We had even joined the Congress Committees of the Banaras and Chandauli tehsils. We were not yet 18, but we were so enthusiastic that we raised our age to 18 and became members of the Congress. We used to visit people in their homes and enroll them as Congress members and spread the Congress message.

We mostly toured the villages of Banaras tehsil. The question was hotly debated whether we could remove British rule through violent means or not. None was willing to concede that any success could be had through Gandhiji's non-cooperation movement. The villagers would ask, "The British have armies and everything besides, what can you do?" The village elders used to talk with us for hours. They had a high opinion of us. They believed we were doing good work. We would tell them that the country's history was glorious, that we had always fought for our independence and had never acquiesced in foreign rule. At the time of the Revolt of '857, there was rebellion in Banaras also. We would narrate all these things. That made them friendly to us and they began to look upon us with great respect. But in the beginning when we went there, there was great opposition and in some places they refused to give us even water to drink out of fear. Nevertheless we again went to those same places and our influence on the people went on increasing. Along with propagating swadeshi and the spinning-wheel, we used to teach the village carpenter to make a spinning-wheel and also to repair it. Apart from this, whenever there was illness in the village, we would visit it. All these things began to impress them and in those same villages where it was difficult to get water to drink before, we began to be welcomed.

In the beginning when people used to gather in the evening at a meeting-place in a village to listen to readings from the *Ramayana* or other books, we used to go there only and soon talk about the movement would begin. Then when meetings were to be held, intimation about them was given to every village

through some boy studying in school from that village by means of a handbill handed to him. The handbill used to reach every village and it was read out to all. The whole village used to receive the information. The people would come and ask various kinds of questions. Thereby there were fewer lectures.

About one thousand volunteers used to work with me at that time. One day together with a hundred volunteers we surrounded toddy palms and said that we would not allow toddy to be tapped that day. Men were posted near every tree. In the beginning they did not dare to do anything. But thereafter three or four men arrived. They found toddy in toddy vessels lying somewhere. They drank it. They were somewhat intoxicated; then they began to belabour us and beat me too. But we said nothing because that was Gandhiji's order. The people of the village gathered there. Gandhiji used to say that it was not an easy thing to conduct a non-violent agitation. If we had not intervened, there would have been a big fight and many would have been killed. Some sticks were used but on our arrival the people stopped the fight. An attempt was made to prosecute us but it failed. There were no witnesses of any kind. We used to go to liquor shops and picket them. The liquor shop would open and the police would put us under arrest. In this way the prohibition movement proceeded and wherever we went, we at least received the blessings of the wives and mothers of the drunkards.

When the Prince of Wales arrived in Banaras on January 17, 1922, there was a hartal in the city. It was Gandhiji's directive that he be shown black flags and his path be deserted. After a big discussion in the Kashi Vidyapith, it was decided that we would have a hartal. At that time there were Acharya Kripalani, Vichitra Narayan Sharma, Manjeet Sinha, Kalika Sinha and many others. Those people and we went to the square and I well remember that spectacle when we would emerge from the lanes of the square and say that if the Prince of Wales came there we would not allow him to proceed but would stop him and offer satyagraha. Batons and sticks were used in Banaras in one or two places only. When, wearing garlands, we started satyagraha, we saw that the ordinary people who were watching *tamashas* in the lanes got inspired. They too would join us. Some were labourers and some came from good

families. Seeing us beaten with sticks, they also got excited. They too joined us. There was strong police and military *bundobust*. The Government had spread its few loyal men here and there. But we satyagrahis were more in number and would not allow them to cross the road. The police had thrown a cordon. They had tied ropes to stakes buried in the ground. There were among us Lal Bahadur and Kamalapati Tripathi too. All those of us who carried black flags were arrested. We shouted "Prince of Wales, go back." Kamalapatiji was the first to be arrested and sent to jail. We were caught and were let off far away near Chunar. We had no idea that the labourers and small shopkeepers of Banaras would wear garlands and put on the *tilak* on their foreheads and join us in large numbers. Some of them later on became very good Congress workers. They included Gyanchandraji, who is no more today. He ran a small jam shop. He went home. He touched his mother's feet, received her blessings and wearing a garland joined us. He later became a very good leader of Banaras. So in this way a number of people joined the movement who could not before even imagine that they would do so.

Wherever Gandhiji went in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, national songs in Bhojpuri had been composed which the people and especially students used to sing in the villages.

You will be surprised to know that wherever men gathered together—in markets, in parks, at shops, on river-banks—the same questions were being discussed: whether children should leave schools or not and how work would go on if the courts were boycotted. Non-cooperation movement had become the subject of discussion. Some said swaraj could not be had without the sword; the talk about non-violence was wrong. It was a wonderful awakening the like of which I have never seen before. Seeing that awakening, what I had read about the French Revolution—that intellectuals used to argue in the lanes of Paris—came to my mind. Everywhere satyagraha began to be discussed. It was a wave such as I had never witnessed in my land. We felt that a revolution was on and we had to prepare ourselves for it. At that time about 15 or 20 pupils had left school but Lal Bahadur, Rajsakhi Sinha, Rajaram Shastri, Altaf Hussain, Gyanswaroop and I did not go back. Forming a procession, we would go before the school and tell

the pupils to come out. There were talks by Kripalaniji in the evenings at the Gandhi Ashram which we attended and during daytime we did propaganda for the movement. In the beginning the leaders of these processions were Vichitra Narayan, Manjeet Sinha and Kalika Sinha. They belonged to the Gandhi Ashram. Generally whoever collected a crowd started off with a procession.

In Banaras there were two big centres where people assembled. One was the Dashashwamedh Ghat, where lots of policemen and C.I.D. men were also present. Here also lived Rajendra Lahiri, Bakshi, Sanyal and Lahiri's elder brother who had been arrested in the first Banaras conspiracy case and these had special contacts with youth. The atmosphere for agitation was created after the Congress session was held in Banaras in 1905. Propaganda for swadeshi also commenced there and later on there was the Bengal agitation. It appeared as though the very air of Banaras was conducive to a political revolution. Besides the Dashashwamedh Ghat, lots of people used to collect together at the Harishchandra School, the Company Bagh, and the Nagari Pracharini Library. There were organisations like the Seva Samiti, the Arya Samaj, etc.

Among those who were drawn into the non-cooperation movement in Banaras were mostly small shopkeepers. The Congress Committee directed that people should enroll themselves as volunteers and enlist others as volunteers. There was a strange way of becoming a volunteer. The police always surrounded the place. Even then people would come to the Congress Committee office, wear a garland, apply the tilak mark and go to jail. Kripalaniji and Dr Bhagavan Das had already been arrested. Lal Bahadur, Harihar Shastri, Kamalapati Tripathi and I were free. Later when 500 to 600 people began to go to jail every day and there was no room there, they began to be kept in tents. We also were arrested but we were boys aged 15 or 16. Therefore we were taken in lorries a distance of twelve or thirteen km and left there. We would walk back and get arrested again next day. Then in bitterest cold, they would give us a bath. In the evening we were kept in police custody and in the morning we were woken up and given a bath and were let off in wet clothes.

Sometimes they would give us a bath at 8 or 9 o'clock at night and release us. In the lanes people sang "With the spinning-wheel we will take swaraj." I witnessed the movements of 1930, 1932 and 1942. The tempo that I saw in 1920-21 in shops, markets, lanes, on roads and in villages was never witnessed again and will never again be seen. We would sing "The Victorious Dear Tricolour" and "Vande Mataram". The police would arrest us. At that time, singing of "Vande Mataram" was an offence under the law.

At that time we had great enthusiasm and the main thing was that we were greatly inspired when Gandhiji had told us that our civilisation and our traditions were very high and noble. It was Gandhiji who first of all pointed out that there was greatness in wearing a *dhoti* and *kurta*. He awakened our self-respect. We acquired strength and we thought that we too could do something. We visited the houses of those who worked in offices. We would ask for their ties and hats, burn them and in return give them Gandhi caps.

Many of our leaders from Banaras are no more now. One of them was Dr Abdul Karim. Both he and his sister joined this movement. He had a small doctor's clinic. He suffered all his life. Another was Shiv Vinayak Mishra whom none knew. Among those who were later reckoned among the great were Shiv Prasad Gupta, Sampurnanandji, Sri Prakasaji, Dr Ramdas Gaur, Pandit Krishnachandra Sharma and Dr H. N. Muttoo. Some members of the Theosophical Society also were arrested among whom was Dr. Gokulnath Mishra. Shiv Prasad Gupta was a big landlord. He at once gave up everything and began to lead a simple life. He was with me in jail in 1930. When there was talk about cleaning utensils in jail, Sri Prakasaji observed: "Both prisoners and leaders are equals here. Why do you make the prisoners clean utensils? Apologise to them and clean them yourself." Thereafter Guptaji began to clean the utensils himself. These were people who had changed their life just as you may have heard about Pandit Motilal Nehru having done so. Sampurnanandji and we were among the very poor at that time.

Among the number of people from cities who joined the satyagraha movements of 1920, 1921 and 1930 and went to

jail, comparatively speaking, Banaras stands first with the highest number. At that time the Arya Samaj too made an important contribution to the awakening in the country. Among those participating in the satyagraha movement in Banaras, the majority belonged to the middle and lower middle classes. All of them were educated people. I saw how by educating people society progressed.

There was in those days a basic difference in the education imparted in the Kashi Vidyapith and the other schools; take, for example, the subject of economics. We were told in the Vidyapith how our country had been exploited. Books on every subject began to be written from the national point of view. At that time Gandhiji used to publish *Young India*. Now it became gospel truth to us. We used to read it and discuss it in village meetings. Moreover, they used to ask us questions which we would answer. Because of our stay in the Vidyapith, we had acquired the habit of delivering speeches. We were accompanied by the Vidyapith teachers too. Sampurnanandji used to tour a lot in our villages and take great interest in them. We took with us Narendra Dev also many times. Ramdasji, Krishnachandra Sharma and Shiv Vinayakji—all these people used to attend meetings.

There was a group of people in the village who used to report to the police about us. But the majority of people were such as did not report at all. The sympathies of some policemen too were with us. Once there was a warrant against me. They came and told me about it immediately. They said, "Go away somewhere. We shall report back that we did not find you here."

Translated from the Hindi.

A Reminiscence

S A T Y A N A R A Y A N S I N H A

I WAS STUDYING in the B.A. class at the Patna College in 1921. I did not then agree with Gandhiji's non-cooperation movement. A resolution on non-cooperation came up at the special Congress session at Calcutta. I did not fully subscribe to the resolution asking students, council members and lawyers to give up their callings. I especially held that students ought not to give up their studies. Prior to the Nagpur Congress, Gandhiji once toured the whole of India. In this connection he had come to Patna. A mammoth meeting was held there. I too attended it. A co-student of mine, Manoranjan Prasad, who was also a good poet, sang a song. It is in Bhojpuri:

*Ka kare Gandhi akel, Tilak paralok gae,
Rahe dher lokanike apase ho vipareet gae.*

What can Gandhi alone do, Tilak has died,
There remain many people's well-wishers who
are divided among themselves.

All the well-known Congress leaders of the time were against the non-cooperation movement. That song so deeply affected me that straight from there I returned to my hostel and took a firm decision that now I would give up my studies and join Gandhiji's movement. People in my house were greatly surprised at how I had suddenly changed my mind. Many of my associates who were staying in the hostel were from the beginning in favour of Gandhiji's movement; there were daily discussions between them and me and I used to voice my opinion against students leaving their studies. Those associates of mine gave up their studies and joined the movement. But within a year all of them returned to the college. They would write letters to me asking me to return in order

to resume studies in the college. But I replied to them that I had then made a firm decision and now I would not leave Gandhiji. Thereafter, I did a lot of work in villages. The district leaders assigned to me the work of organising villages. After only a few days, those people were so pleased with my work that I was elected secretary of a sub-divisional Congress Committee.

Gandhiji's impact on Bihar was very great. Bihar was backward in regard to political matters. The work which Gandhiji had done in Champaran two years before starting his non-cooperation movement had quite electrified the people of Bihar.

After Gandhiji's resolution on the non-cooperation movement was passed in the Nagpur Congress, a meeting of the All India Congress Committee was held at Bezwada in which a resolution was passed that by June 30, 1921 a crore of rupees must be collected, 20 lakh spinning-wheels must be got plying and a crore Congress members must be enrolled. In this connection, I wish to refer to an incident that took place at the Nagpur Congress. The decision taken at the special session of the Congress at Calcutta was to be finalised at the annual session to be held at Nagpur. Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das was opposed to non-cooperation and he had come to Nagpur from Calcutta with 300 delegates in order to oppose Gandhiji's non-cooperation resolution. There was lot of activity in the Congress camp at Nagpur. Gandhiji specially went and met Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das at the latter's camp and from about 8 in the evening till 1 a.m. both discussed matters with each other. Finally Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das came under Gandhiji's spell and he decided that he would fully support the resolution on the non-cooperation movement. When the Congress session commenced in the morning, Das moved the resolution and Gandhiji stood up to second it. Earlier, people created pandemonium because they had believed that C. R. Das was definitely against it. Now that it was known that he was moving it, he was cheered from all sides. The resolution was passed unanimously. The attendance at this session was unprecedented.

I remember that at that time a new wave had surged through the villages of Bihar and people took quite a good deal of interest in activities like the spinning-wheel, the handloom and the welfare of the untouchables. All sorts of things were being said about Gandhiji at that time. Many regarded him as an incarnation of God. At the beginning of the non-cooperation movement, schools and colleges remained deserted for months and none visited the courts. But sometime thereafter the students returned to their schools and colleges and the courts too began to function again. Gandhiji's influence was felt more in the villages of Bihar than in its towns.

Translated from the Hindi.

1921—Eventful Year

SRI PRAKASA

THE YEAR 1921 is regarded as having witnessed the first non-cooperation or civil disobedience movement started by Mahatma Gandhi for the winning of the freedom of the country. The occasion was the boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales. In order to appreciate and understand the events of that time, it would be necessary to go back a few years to the time when Mahatma Gandhi returned to his country after his long and successful adventure in South Africa for the vindication of the rights as citizens of our countrymen who had gone there.

Mahatma Gandhi came back to India early in the year 1915. He had always regarded Gopal Krishna Gokhale as his political guru; and so on his return he consulted Gokhale regarding his future work. Gokhale is reported to have told him quite frankly that India was not South Africa, and that the methods that proved successful there would not do here. Gokhale further advised Mahatma Gandhi that he should keep quiet for a whole year and study the situation in the land. After that period of silence he could decide his own line of activity.

It so happened that this year of enforced silence ended at the time of the founding of the Banaras Hindu University early in 1916. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the founder of the University, had arranged a series of lectures to be delivered by eminent persons who had come for the occasion, after the foundation-stone had been laid by the then Viceroy, Lord Hardinge. It was Mahatma Gandhi's turn to speak one evening. It was the first time that he did so in public since his arrival in the country a year earlier.

Mahatma Gandhi was annoyed over many matters to which he gave expression on that occasion. One was that our cities

were very dirty. He had visited the famous Vishwanath Temple that morning; and the dirt inside and also in the precincts of the temple very greatly upset him. He was a person who believed in scrupulous cleanliness, and his irritation could be understood. He referred to this at the very start of his speech. Then he said that Englishmen were very good and courteous in their own country, but became very rude and arrogant here. For this change in their nature, we ourselves must be responsible, for doubtless it was their contact with us that turned them from good and decent folks into bad ones. Thirdly, it was the poverty of the general masses of the people that had very greatly distressed him.

When he spoke, a large number of Indian Princes bedecked with jewels were sitting on the dais. He turned to them, and asked them to sell their jewels and utilise the proceeds for the well-being of the poor. That created a stir. Lastly he came to the very extreme steps that had been taken by the authorities for the protection of the Viceroy. The whole town was in a state of siege, and its social and economic life was totally upset during Lord Hardinge's visit to lay the foundation-stone of the Hindu University. Mahatma Gandhi spoke rather harshly, and even said that it would have been better for the Viceroy to be shot than for a whole town to be terrorised in that manner. This resulted in the total break-up of the meeting for the Chairman and the Princes as well as the distinguished visitors in the front rows all got up to leave. The meeting ended in confusion. It, however, did give a foretaste of what was to come.

Later in December of the same year 1916, Mahatma Gandhi attended the annual session of the Indian National Congress held at Lucknow. All round the pandal where the Subjects Committee meeting of the Congress was being held, there was constant shouting of "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai" ("Victory to Mahatma Gandhi"). I remember that this greatly annoyed S. Satyamurthi who said that Mahatmaji might as well go out and receive his ovations so that the work of the Committee may proceed. There is no doubt that the loud noises outside were disturbing the proceedings rather badly. This Congress session was presided over by Ambika Charan Majumdar, and was a unique one in many ways. It saw the reuniting of the

extremist and moderate sections; it brought about an understanding between the Muslim League and the Congress so that both could fight for the common cause as a united body: and it also drew up a constitution for the Congress which had been without any during the thirty years of its previous existence.

At this Congress some persons from Bihar met Mahatmaji and spoke to him about the hardships that workers were suffering at the hands of the British indigo-planters. Mahatmaji went to Bihar and at Champaran put into practice his method of civil disobedience by disobeying the orders served on him by the District Magistrate. This resulted in a compromise, and Mahatmaji was successful in his endeavours. This was absolutely the first occasion that civil disobedience or non-cooperation was witnessed in practice in the country.

Mahatma Gandhi was feeling his way during the years that followed. The first Great War was on at the time; and under the leadership of Mrs Annie Besant a great agitation for political reforms was raised, her slogan being that England's difficulty was India's opportunity. She was interned in the summer of 1917. A visit from the Secretary of State for India, Mr. E. S. Montagu followed who gave his report later recommending the expansion of legislatures. In 1919 after the end of the first Great War, there was martial law in the Punjab culminating in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. The first Great War was over. The British, flushed with victory, repaid the Punjab in this cruel manner for its unstinted services to them in the war. Mahatma Gandhi took a leading part in the enquiries that were non-officially held into the sad events of those days. The report was signed in my home city of Banaras, and stalwarts like Pandit Motilal Nehru and Deshbhandhu Chittaranjan Das were not at all pleased with Mahatma Gandhi making very moderate demands from the Government after these tragedies. Mahatma Gandhi's reply was that we should make only such demands which, if not conceded, we could enforce. It was no use making too big demands and then sitting quiet. That shows the attitude of Mahatmaji towards life in general.

At the Amritsar Congress of December 1919, Mahatmaji

might be regarded as taking a rather moderate stand after all that had happened in that very city only a few months earlier when even his meagre demands were not conceded. The first general elections under the newly propagated Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were to take place early in December 1920. So a special session of the Congress was held at Calcutta in September to decide the attitude of Congressmen regarding them. Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak was to have presided, but he died in August. Lala Lajpat Rai presided instead. The holding of this session became necessary as the usual annual session was to be held after the dates scheduled for the elections. The Congress decided to boycott the elections. At the annual session of the Congress at Nagpur in December 1920, held under the presidentship of C. Vijayaraghavachari, Mahatma Gandhi became the supreme head of the Congress and leader of the land. He put forward his constructive programme of Hindu-Muslim unity, abolition of untouchability, propagation of khadi and prohibition. At the same time under his non-cooperation scheme he called for the giving up of titles, boycott of legislatures, courts of law and official educational institutions.

The year 1921 opened on the morrow of the Nagpur Congress. It is a most important year in our freedom struggle, for not only does it mark its real beginning in the true sense of the word, but it also sets out an ideal and prescribes the method of achieving it. Mahatma Gandhi was not a person to rest on his oars. He started implementing immediately the programme he had chalked out at Nagpur. It is remarkable that within six weeks the great national educational institution, the Kashi Vidyapith, in my home city of Banaras (now Varanasi) was inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi. The great patriot-millionaire-philanthropist Shiv Prasad Gupta generously donated rupees ten lakhs for the purpose.

Mahatma Gandhi accompanied by Maulana Shaukat Ali and Maulana Mahomed Ali—the Ali brothers—arrived in Banaras for the ceremony. The roofs of the train that carried them were crowded with human beings. The compartments themselves were filled to overflowing. The railway platform was one mass of men. They had come from all walks of life, everyone being eager to give the Mahatma a fitting welcome. There

was scarcely any standing room anywhere. Maulana Mahomed Ali with his strong big body pushed himself along through the crowd, making a narrow passage for Gandhiji to come through. At the inauguration ceremony itself, the grounds in the quarter of the town called Bhadaini where the Vidyapith started functioning and where it remained till it moved to its own premises on the road near the Cantonment Railway station, now called after it, were overcrowded with a vast mass of human beings.

On the platform were present, besides Mahatmaji himself, great leaders like Pandit Motilal Nehru, the Ali brothers. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad among others. Dr Bhagavan Das, the first Chancellor of the Vidyapith, welcomed the vast gathering and gave an inspiring address on the ideals of education co-ordinating the ancient traditions of the land with the requirements of modern times.

A notable incident of the time was the arrest there of Baba Rama Chandra, a most courageous worker in the neighbouring villages of Jaunpur, Sultanpur and Partabgarh, who had roused the countryside by his fervid eloquence and highlighted the grievances of the humble helpless village folks. He had made himself most popular—was indeed the idol of the people—and so had become a thorn in the side of the British Government of the time which was after his blood. Naturally there was great excitement. Jawaharlal Nehru went boldly among the people and persuaded them to be calm and collected, telling them to allow the leader to be arrested quietly. He told them that theirs was a non-violent movement and they must obey the Mahatma's behests.

The Vidyapith has played a great part in the freedom struggle. All its staff and students used to be arrested and imprisoned in the successive non-cooperation movements, and for long years its premises used to be under the lock and key of the police. It attracted on its staff such learned teachers as Acharya Narendra Dev and Dr Sampurnanand. Many of its students like Lal Bahadur, Tribhuvan Narayan Singh, Kamalapati Tripathi have played a notable part as ministers in the Central and State Governments after swaraj was won.

The year 1921 will also be remembered for the successful call that Mahatma Gandhi made for a crore of rupees for the Tilak Swaraj Fund and a crore of members for the Congress. During this year many national educational institutions, besides the Kashi Vidyapith, were established at Patna, Ahmedabad, Aligarh, Lahore, Poona and other places. Later in the year came the visits of the Duke of Connaught and the Prince of Wales. These visits were boycotted by the people as instructed by Mahatma Gandhi. The boycott of the Prince of Wales which was accompanied by mass arrests of political leaders and Congress workers all over the country has rightly been regarded as the first non-cooperation or civil disobedience movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi in the country's freedom struggle.

It was a curious spectacle that met the eye those days. Wherever the Royal Princes went, they saw only empty roads. When Mahatma Gandhi followed, there were tremendous ovations from huge crowds that gathered on the roadsides. The biggest people in the land because of their active boycott of the Prince's visit were arrested and sent to jail. Pandit Motilal Nehru, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Lala Lajpat Rai, Dr Bhagavan Das along with thousands of workers, high and humble, were all put behind the bars during those days.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya invested the Prince with an honorary doctorate at his Hindu University. Because of the boycott, it was not easy for Panditji to gather an audience to attend his function. Most of our Congressmen those days courted imprisonment by their picketing of liquor shops and shops where foreign cloth was sold. The whole of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee that met at Allahabad consisting of fifty-five members was arrested and all the members were sent to jail. The whole country seemed to be in a state of revolt, and the Government had a hard time arranging for the tour of the Prince to go through. So far as I know, the Government had no idea that there would be this very successful boycott of the Prince's visit, otherwise they would surely not have taken the risk of his coming to the country.

All the events that I have noted above took place by December 1921 at the end of which the annual session of the

1921—EVENTFUL YEAR

Congress was to be held in Ahmedabad, Mahatma Gandhi's headquarters. If I remember aright, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das was to preside over it, but he being in jail, Hakim Ajmal Khan acted as President. Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had arranged for a total non-cooperation movement to be started in Bardoli in Gujarat soon afterwards. Mahatma Gandhi had actually sent a letter to the Viceroy saying that this would be so started, but just before this there was the unfortunate incident at Chauri Chaura in the Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh where there was an attack on a police station during which a number of policemen were killed. Mahatma Gandhi immediately withdrew his projected non-cooperation at Bardoli saying that his lesson of non-violence had not penetrated the country, and the people were not ready for non-violent non-cooperation as his movement was generally called. This action of Mahatma Gandhi sent a wave of resentment in the country among Congressmen in general, but he was firm in his resolve, and everyone had to yield. Pandit Motilal Nehru and others sent him angry letters that were smuggled from jail disapproving his action.

Soon afterwards Mahatma Gandhi himself was arrested and sentenced to six years' imprisonment. The judge who tried him extended the greatest courtesy to Mahatma Gandhi saying that he never had an accused person like him to try, and would never have one in the future either; and Mahatma Gandhi himself was the very picture of politeness to the trying judge. The Prince of Wales soon after left the country at the conclusion of his four-month tour. The political movement did suffer a bad set-back after Mahatma Gandhi's long imprisonment.

It was towards the latter part of the year 1922 that the jailed leaders came out to meet at the Congress at Gaya in December. Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das was the President of the session, and it was here that a great split took place in the Congress, for while Pandit Motilal Nehru, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Vithalbhai Patel and Hakim Ajmal Khan were for entry into the councils for purposes of non-cooperation from within, Rajagopalachari, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Seth Jamnalal and others were against this move asking the people to adhere fast to Mahatma Gandhi's programme.

The Congress officially resolved against council entry which led to the formation of the Swaraj Party. It should be mentioned here that about this time there was a tremendous furore regarding the Khilafat which was sought to be abolished by the Western powers which had been successful in the Great War. Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress favoured the retention of the Khilafat, and extended their support in this behalf to Muslim India. Large numbers of *Maulanas* gathered at the Gaya Congress, and may be almost regarded as giving the lead to the Congress in the matter of its decisions. The Khilafat was, however, later abolished by Ata Turk Kemal Pasha. The *Maulanas* left the Congress, forgot the Khilafat and regarded the Ata Turk as a great Gazi and hero.

As the next elections were to be held in early December 1923 before the next Congress was to meet, the Swaraj Party was able to get a special session of the Congress held in the middle of the year 1923 in which it was resolved to permit such Congressmen as favoured council entry to go to the legislatures under the auspices of the Swaraj Party. The struggle between those who favoured council entry and those who opposed it went on till 1934 when the Congress itself officially resolved in favour of Congressmen going to the councils.

It will be seen that the great stress that Mahatma Gandhi laid was on unity among all classes and communities in the country, and also on their relying on themselves for meeting all their requirements. He was anxious to rouse in us a sense of true patriotic feeling and self-confidence so that we might be able to look after ourselves and fulfil all our needs without dependence on any foreign power. He was also most anxious that his people should live pure lives and follow the path of righteousness and peace. He was out to spiritualise politics which is ordinarily regarded as an unclean game.

Mahatma Gandhi particularly pleaded for communal harmony which took the form of inculcating in all hearts and minds love for Hindu-Muslim unity, going so far as to support even the Khilafat movement in the hope of bringing the Muslims on his side. His earnest plea for the abolition of untouchability from Hindu society—and even staking his life

for it—was also an expression of his intense desire for unity of all the people of the land—high or humble—regardless of caste or creed.

Then his insistence on the propagation of khadi—hand-spun and hand-woven cloth—followed later by his encouragement of various cottage industries proved that he wanted to bring the towns and villages near to one another and make the people in general self-confident, self-reliant and self sufficient. His plea for the abolition of intoxicants and harmful drugs was his method of making us live clean, pure and God-fearing lives.

Though fifty years have passed since the Master preached these high principles, and though for over twenty years, we have been a free people—masters of our own destiny in every way—we still need the great truths of the Mahatma to be instilled in us, over and over again, for human nature being weak, we are always liable to go astray. If only the lessons of 1921 would live in our hearts and minds, 1971 will indeed be a happy year and all will ever be well with us.

Amritsar and After

RAGHUKUL TILAK

IN THE CHAIN of events which preceded and prepared the ground for the non-cooperation movement, the first of which I have a vivid recollection was the Congress session at Amritsar in December 1919. I had done my B.A. from the Allahabad University earlier in the year and had been preparing to go to England for further studies. But partly because of the grave happenings in the country, I gave up the idea and journeyed to Amritsar instead as a delegate from Meerut. In those days there used to be no contested elections for Congress delegates and almost anybody who paid the small fee required could be enrolled as a delegate and had the right to vote at the sessions.

The journey to and the stay at Amritsar were more in the nature of a pilgrimage than attendance at a political gathering. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the other atrocities in the Punjab had stirred the nation as nothing else had within living memory. But even after martial law had been lifted, news from the Punjab came only in trickles and perhaps only the top leaders knew what had really happened. The Hunter Committee and the Inquiry Committee appointed by the Congress were yet to submit their reports. So it was only after we had visited the Jallianwala Bagh and seen the blood stains and the bullet marks on the houses and the wall surrounding it and had actually walked through the notorious crawling lane, through which even innocent persons having no connection with the disturbances had been made to crawl on their bellies, that we realised the full depth and extent of the tragedy. Such visits induced a mood of grim determination in the delegates. It was bitterly cold and rained heavily during the session and the delegates' tents were flooded with ankle-deep water. But such was our mental preoccupation with the grave issues facing the country that nobody seemed to mind.

The session itself heralded the dawn of a new era. It was the first Gandhi Congress. The old stalwarts—Tilak, Malaviya, Annie Besant, C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru, Jinnah and many others—were there but it was Gandhiji who dominated the scene. The leaders were all on the dais but Gandhiji, characteristically, sat among the delegates below. When the President announced his name and as he, clad in *dhoti* and *kurta* and wrapped in a rough blanket, walked slowly towards the dais, all eyes turned to him and the Congress pandal, for the first time, rang with shouts of "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai", a slogan soon to echo and re-echo from every nook and corner of India.

Speeches in Hindustani were, for the first time, heard from the Congress platform though, if I remember correctly, Gandhiji himself delivered his main speech in English. There were no microphones at the time and his was one of the very few speeches which could be clearly heard because of the pindrop silence. Another significant feature was the presence of about 2,000 peasant delegates.

A new accent, characteristically Gandhian, could also be discerned in the resolution regarding the Punjab atrocities. While everybody wanted to denounce "the cold-blooded, calculated massacre of innocent men, women and children" and demand the dismissal of Dyer and the recall of Lord Chelmsford, Gandhiji alone insisted that we should not spare our own failings. In the end he had his way and boldly declared that real manliness consisted in not retaliating even under a shower of bullets and that madness must not be returned with madness but with sanity.

But the main issue before the session was whether and how to work the new reforms. Here again Gandhiji took a line different from the others. While C. R. Das who drafted and moved the resolution and Lokamanya Tilak were for obstruction and rejection and characterised the proposed reforms as "inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing", Gandhiji, supported by Pandit Malaviya, was for working the reforms. He asserted that, if they were going to accept and work the reforms for what they were worth, it would be un-

realistic and ungracious to brand them as "disappointing" and insisted on dropping the word. For some time it looked as if there might be a confrontation between Das and Gandhiji but in the end a compromise resolution suggested by Jai-ramdas Doulatram was accepted by both and carried.

The resolution on swadeshi also carried a Gandhian touch in it in that it recommended the revival of hand-spinning and hand-weaving.

Events moved rapidly after the Amritsar session. The Government remained wholly unrepentant over the Punjab atrocities. Dyer and O'Dwyer were regarded as great heroes by certain sections of the British public. Nor was the British Government in any mood to honour its assurance with regard to the peace terms with Turkey and so the Khilafat issue was coming to the fore. As a result, Gandhiji who had risked his life recruiting soldiers for the British army and had put in such a strong plea in favour of the reforms was beginning to feel thoroughly disillusioned and gradually turning into a "rebel". There appeared to be no alternative to some form of direct action.

The Muslim leaders, including Maulana Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan and the Ali brothers, met at Delhi to consider the Khilafat issue and Gandhiji joined the deliberations. After a deputation had failed to secure any satisfactory assurance from the Viceroy, Gandhiji worked out and placed before the leaders his plan for non-cooperation which, after some doubt and hesitation, was finally accepted.

I had the privilege of attending the momentous Khilafat Conference held at Meerut in the latter half of January 1920. It was at this conference that Gandhiji, for the first time, placed his plan for non-cooperation before the people. To begin with, those holding offices of honour or receiving emoluments were to give them up. The use of foreign cloth was to be completely eschewed and hand-spinning and hand-weaving were to be encouraged in every possible way. The observance of complete non-violence was emphasised as an essential condition for the success of the movement. While Gandhiji was speaking, Maulana Shaukat Ali, in a dramatic gesture expressing complete agreement, tore out his neck-tie and threw it away.

In May 1920, the peace terms to be imposed on Turkey and the white-washing Hunter Committee report were published. This led to further frustration and resentment and, at the A.I.C.C. meeting held at Banaras towards the end of the month, Gandhiji proposed that the Congress should recommend a programme of non-cooperation for immediate adoption by the country. The A.I.C.C., however, considered that it was not competent to change the Amritsar decision on reforms and resolved to have a special session of the Congress at Calcutta to consider the question.

In the meantime, Gandhiji was pouring his heart out, week after week, in the pages of *Young India* pleading passionately for non-violence, Hindu-Muslim unity, hand-spinning, replacement of English by Indian languages, labour welfare, village uplift and many other problems, thus preparing the people to face the storm that loomed large on the horizon.

The giving up of titles and honorary posts was to commence on August 1, 1920. On this very day the great Lokamanya Tilak passed away. His last words were: "Unless swarajya is achieved, India shall not prosper. It is required for our very existence." On this day also Gandhiji gave the signal for the non-cooperation movement by his historic letter to the Viceroy, surrendering his titles and decorations.

Early in September the special session of the Congress was held at Calcutta. Lala Lajpat Rai presided. Gandhiji placed his full scheme of non-cooperation before the Congress for acceptance. This included the triple boycott of courts, councils and Government educational institutions and boycott of foreign cloth. The two objectives were the attainment of swaraj and the redress of the Khilafat wrongs. The resolution was opposed by Das and Bipin Chandra Pal among others but was ultimately carried by a substantial majority. It was ratified by the Nagpur session of the Congress by an even greater majority.

In 1921 I was in Calcutta studying for my M.A. in Ancient Indian History and Culture at the University and working part-time as assistant editor of the nationalist Hindi daily, the *Vishwamitri*, founded and then also being edited by Moolchand Agrawal. This paper wholeheartedly supported the Congress stand.

Bengal, like U.P., was in the forefront of the movement which was in full swing there. On an appeal by C. R. Das 3,000 college students went on strike and thousands of boys and girls deserted schools run by the Government. National schools were being started in Bengal as well as in the rest of the country. Gandhiji himself visited Calcutta in February to open the National College there. At the same time many eminent lawyers in the country, such as C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad and Rajagopalachari had given up legal practice and were devoting themselves wholly to national service.

Two things stand out in my memory during my stay in Calcutta in 1921: the countrywide arrests and repression that followed the ban on all volunteer organisations under the Congress and the Khilafat in November and the visit of the Prince of Wales to Calcutta later in the year.

The ban on the volunteer organisations had perhaps been intended to ensure a peaceful atmosphere for the Prince's visit but actually it had just the opposite effect. There was open defiance of the ban all over the country. Thousands, including C. R. Das, Lajpat Rai, Motilal Nehru, Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru, were arrested. Many more thousands came forward to offer themselves for arrest. Physical assaults on volunteers, stripping them naked and ducking them into tanks were some of the new methods of torture devised by the police. Congress and Khilafat offices were broken open and sometimes burnt and their records destroyed. There were also reports of women having been outraged and their jewellery forcibly removed.

All this gave a guilty conscience to the British residents of Calcutta. I personally witnessed an incident which showed how needlessly they feared and misunderstood the movement. One day there were some Europeans including ladies shopping in the Stuart Hogg Market (now perhaps renamed the New Market). From the other end entered a group of volunteers shouting, "Bharatmata ki Jai", "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai". As the market is covered with a roof, the shouts reverberated with magnified volume and, as a result, two of the ladies fainted out of fear. But when the volunteers came up, they

rendered all possible help and saw the ladies safely home.

It was not possible for me to continue my studies in this atmosphere. The Calcutta University had been badly shaken and it was only Sir Asutosh Mookerjee's personal prestige and influence with the students that kept it going just as Pandit Malaviya's influence had done at Banaras. Still many had left and I myself stopped attending my classes at the university and devoted my whole time to the *Vishwamitra*. The editor, Moolchand, was expecting arrest any moment and asked me to take over as editor in his absence and be ready to follow suit when my turn came.

But just then the Government changed its tactics. Where repression had failed, reconciliation might possibly succeed, and so the Viceroy gave his blessings to the negotiations started by Pandit Malaviya for a rapprochement between the Congress and the Government. Pandit Malaviya came to Calcutta and met Das and Azad in the Presidency Jail. But Gandhiji was adamant. He wanted a positive and definite commitment from the Government over the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs and swaraj. The negotiations failed.

Towards the end of the year the Prince of Wales came to Calcutta. The Congress had appealed for a boycott of the visit while making it clear that it had nothing personal against the Prince. But I doubt if the boycott had been so successful anywhere else as in Calcutta. Never had this great city witnessed such a massive demonstration of silent protest. The hartal was complete. Not a shop remained open except some owned by Europeans. All movement had stopped and the main thoroughfares presented a desolate appearance. The Prince was quietly taken to the Government House by a route different from the one originally planned. The heaps of sweets and blankets, which the authorities had stored at the railway station in the hope of attracting at least a crowd of beggars to welcome the Prince, remained untouched. Unlike what had happened in Bombay, there were no violent incidents here.

Then early in February 1922, just as preparations had been completed for mass civil disobedience in Bardoli, came Chauri Chaura, like a bolt from the blue, and a sudden halt

of the movement. Following a clash between some Congress processionists and the police, a mob had set fire to a *thana* in Chauri Chaura, a village in Gorakhpur district, and a number of police constables had been burnt alive. This was, as Gandhiji said, the index finger which pointed to the way India may easily take if drastic precautions were not taken betimes and he decided to suspend the movement. This decision had a mixed reception. The leaders most of whom were in jail reacted unfavourably and blamed Gandhiji for punishing the whole country for the criminal folly of a few individuals in an obscure corner of India. But most of those outside and in daily contact with the movement could see that it was gradually weakening and getting out of control and, therefore, appreciated the wisdom and necessity of the step. The country needed a spell of rest for further preparation.

What did the non-cooperation movement achieve? Swaraj was still far off and the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs remained unredressed. The courts, the councils and the Government schools were still functioning. But it was no small matter that more than 30,000 men and women had deliberately courted arrest and thousands of others had bravely faced police lathis and some even bullets. Many top lawyers had renounced princely incomes and comforts and cheerfully embraced poverty. Hundreds of students had left Government institutions and joined national schools. Lakhs had taken to hand-spinning and wearing khaddar. Above all, the people had shaken off fear and stood hopeful and self-reliant. The illusion of British might and of the right and capacity of the British to go on ruling the country had been broken for ever. Basically, what the movement did was to pave the way for bigger movements later which were to end only in complete independence with all its problems and responsibilities.

All in all, it was an exhilarating experience and one could truthfully say with Wordsworth:

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive.
But to be young was very heaven!"

That Infallible Weapon—Non-cooperation

HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

AUGUST 1, 1920 will always remain memorable in the national history of India. That same day an extraordinarily luminous personality of India, Lokamanya Tilak, joined the five elements and from that sacred and inspiring funeral flame spread in India through Mahatma Gandhi the life-sustaining fire of non-cooperation. After a ceaseless non-violent struggle of 27 years, it at last fulfilled in 1947 the vow of the Lokamanya—"Swarajya is my birthright and I will have it." At that time, it appeared as if the Lokamanya made over to his greatest and purest heir, Gandhiji, all the power of his penance, all the heat of his fire, all his urges for freedom and all his life-work when he left his body. And he too through greater devotion, efficiency, steadfastness, firmness and attachment than those of a traditional heir and through a unique and powerful revolution discharged his debt in full. Just as the Lokamanya departed trusting India's future to Gandhiji, Gandhiji too departed, trusting India's future to Jawaharlal and the Sardar. One evening in one spot a scalding sun set and at the same time in another spot a great, pure, peaceful, nectar-raining moon rose.

Gandhiji's arrival in India was too of this sort—"He came, he saw, he conquered." We may regard it as a miracle. None could guess ere this how we could free ourselves from British rule with its unlimited army. Big leaders of the Punjab, Maharashtra and Bengal like Lal, Bal and Pal and thousands of their followers and proud devotees were ready with shrouds on their heads to stake their lives for freedom, yet none could find a definite road to it. Gandhiji supplied the want by coming like a shooting star and blowing the conch of non-cooperation. He diagnosed that the British did not establish themselves here so much on their armed strength as on the co-operation of Indians. No one's attention had so far gone to this point.

Moreover, Gandhiji had brought with him all the glorious and heroic experience of satyagraha in South Africa. Upon his arrival, he gave an extremely candid speech, on the occasion of the laying of the foundation-stone of the Banaras Hindu University; it took the rajas and maharajas present by surprise and Mrs Besant got annoyed and left. He showed for the first time that he would be a Prahlada-like satyagrahi. Then in Champaran, Kheda and elsewhere when he showed iron firmness together with exemplary humility and courtesy to the British Government India began to experience inwardly a wonderful awakening, self-assurance, daring and hope. With all this halo of light came non-cooperation which took firm root in India. The opposition to the Rowlatt Act and the tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh did not permit non-cooperation to remain merely on the intellectual level but also provided a taste of its practical effectiveness. Finally, in 1930 it revealed its colossal visage of actual rebellion in the form of salt satyagraha.

The true power was of course non-cooperation and, though Gandhiji did not discover it, he made a successful experiment in it. What we have called "satyagraha" or "civil disobedience" was merely the central and living form of non-cooperation. The seeds of non-cooperation had taken root in the people's demand to the effect that "there would be no taxation without representation". No representation, no tax. In other words, if we are not given a hearing, if no attention is paid to our demand, the Government has no right to collect taxes from us. This very principle gave birth to thoughts of civil disobedience also. But it was Gandhiji alone who promoted its intellectual development and its proper organisation and experimented with it successfully in a big field. This throws unusual light on his genius, capacity for work, leadership and spiritual splendour. He did not merely give this message only to India but also to the world and the entire human race; he bequeathed it to them in the form of a successful experiment and wonderful weapon. He has added a new chapter in letters of gold not only to the history of India but also to that of the welfare, progress and development of mankind. He has given a living magic formula, a principle and a technique to communities which are harassed,

fallen, backward, helpless and weak in the form of non-co-operation and its denouement satyagraha—civil disobedience.

The whole period of the freedom struggle from 1921 to 1947 may be regarded as a phase of non-cooperation. In the boy-cott of the welcome to the Prince of Wales in 1921, Gandhiji taught his first lesson. The directions about hartals, etc., prior to it were its foundation-stone or merely the signposts. At the time of the A.I.C.C. meeting in Bombay, the first big bonfire of foreign cloth was lighted by Gandhiji—this writer was a witness to it. The wonderful inspiration I got on seeing that revolutionary scene and listening to Gandhiji's prophetic speech—I felt inspired to sacrifice anything for the sake of freedom—it is difficult to draw a picture thereof today. When foreign cloth was burnt objections were raised on behalf of big and wise men, saying that it would spread revulsion for the Englishmen, that instead of burning the clothes, they should be given away to the poor. Gandhiji retorted, "I actually see in those foreign clothes the germs of the plague of slavery; then how can we give them to others? To burn them is the only remedy."

Non-cooperation has a negative implication—not to offer co-operation or help. It has also a positive meaning—offering co-operation or help. Non-cooperation with evil and evil deeds; co-operation with goodness and good deeds. In the political field, it means co-operation with people's demands and aspirations; if the Government accepts them and their justness and yet does not satisfy them, it becomes inevitable to non-cooperate with it. In order to make non-cooperation with the Government fruitful and meaningful, it is equally inevitable to receive people's co-operation for it. If it is the people's demand, to co-operate in getting it conceded becomes their duty also. When both the justness of a demand and people's co-operation coalesce, no power in the world can hold back your success.

Even one individual can offer non-cooperation. But its effectiveness will be no greater than the effectiveness of his individuality. The word "effectiveness" implies justness of a demand, an individual's selfless service, sacrifice, penance, competence, organising power and other qualities

of leadership. Gandhiji possessed both kinds of power. He returned from South Africa bringing with him the splendid individuality of a successful satyagrahi and then gradually through concentrated study he dominated not only the political life of the whole of India but also its public life. His work and effectiveness had three spheres. The first, his own Satyagraha Ashrams at Sabarmati and Wardha and later the Gandhi Ashram at Hatundi (Ajmer) and many other Ashrams were workshops where workers went through the fire and became freedom fighters. The rules and regulations which Gandhiji had drawn up after some thought and experience for the success of his life and of human life or for its ultimate goal were being observed at these Ashrams with devotion and vigilance; this was Gandhiji's military strength, to which he could revert in any situation as a last resort.

Readers know that when he undertook the Dandi march for launching the salt satyagraha, he had taken with him soldiers—men and women—from these same Ashrams and then again when he commenced individual satyagraha, he chose the best and most balanced satyagrahi, Vinoba, who was the teacher and life of the Satyagraha Ashram of Wardha. In training these satyagrahis, who were in spiritual parlance students of life and in political language fighters for swaraj, Gandhiji and his closest associates like Maganlal Gandhi, Kaka Kalelkar, Kishorelal Mashruwala, Mahadev Desai, Jamnalal Bajaj and others had to take lots of trouble. On one occasion, Bapuji said to this writer, "Haribhau, in running this Ashram I exhaust myself, while I have been fighting the stormy battle of satyagraha smilingly in a playful way; there I do not have to exert myself in the least." Ashrams of this type constituted Gandhiji's military camps. This was the sphere of his pure work and service.

Gandhiji's second field of work was the Congress organisation, which he got on account of single-minded devotion, service and ability—not through craftiness, improvisation or election tactics. Then followed events like Champaran, Kheda, the Rowlatt Act, the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, Hindu-Muslim riots, strikes by mill-hands, etc., one after another in which Gandhiji jumped with alacrity and generally in all these he revealed his qualities and powers such as fearlessness, splen-

our, satyagraha, organising skill, practical horse-sense, love, kindness and non-violence. This resulted in the greatest and ablest leaders of the time flocking to his standard and the Congress became such a powerful organisation that Gandhiji was made its sole representative and sent to attend the Round Table Conference.

Gandhiji's third field of activity was non-Congressmen. Those whose thoughts and actions were alike and whose feelings were pure could live together for life and work together. Those whose thoughts differed a little but had no objection to going on together could at times and on occasion be comrades, but co-operation could sometimes be offered to or sought from those in whose thoughts and actions there was a hiatus but whose feelings were pure and who aimed high. In these three categories, the first one consisted of Ashram inmates, the second of Congressmen and the third of non-Congressmen. Even among the non-Congressmen there were those who appeared to be promising, brilliant, honest and deserving individuals; regardless of the field or institution to which they belonged. Gandhiji offered to them not only his friendship but also made successful endeavours to establish kinship with them. Among these may be reckoned Gokhale, Gurudev, Andrews, Sapru, Jayakar, Srinivasa Sastri, Ramananda Chatterjee, Mrs Besant, Bahadurji, Sethna, Cowasji Jehangir, Savarkar, Jinnah, the Aga Khan, some rajas and maharajas of the time and others. Some of these were his opponents, but Gandhiji respected their individuality, patriotism and keenness for independence. Gandhiji knew where he had to press Ashramites into service, where Congressmen were to be sacrificed and where assistance was to be sought from non-Congressmen. Gandhiji maintained such cordial but cautious relations with individuals in all these categories that he had no difficulty or embarrassment in getting co-operation from or offering non-cooperation to any one of them according to time and circumstance. And where he was receiving willing co-operation, in the event of non-cooperation, none ever entertained misunderstanding or illwill.

He pitted the power of inner co-operation of almost the whole of India against the British Empire. Here he made

simultaneous use of the twin principles of co-operation and non-cooperation, but it must be stated that consciously or unconsciously both these principles have been working hand in hand. On one side of the coin is carved co-operation and on the other non-cooperation. Both sides together make up the single coin. Non-cooperation with the British Government, salt satyagraha, breaking of laws, "do or die"—all these have now become actual facts of history, but he has not hesitated to non-cooperate not only with foreign countries and foreigners but also on certain occasions with even family members in the home and with compatriots in the country. When upon release from jail the problem of changers and no-changers came up before him in 1924-25, and on the founding of the Swaraj Party, he had to contend with Deshbandhu Das and Motilalji, he made over the Congress to them—he insisted on retaining constructive work for himself and this to such an extent that if anyone in those days asked him a question bearing on political controversies, he would retort why such a big question was asked to an ordinary person who only believed in the spinning-wheel !

The Ahmedabad Congress provided a good example of this. The Congress session was going on. A cow devotee, Bade, stood up and presented in some resolution a proposal or some amendment on the subject of cow protection. Gandhiji and on his advice the then Congress President, Hakim Ajmal Khan, did not agree with it and rejected it; then Bade became adamant. Emphasising his proposal, he continued to stand. Even though the President asked him again and again to stop, he did not do so and said that so long as his suggestion was not approved, he would not budge. Seeing a possibility of disorder in the meeting, Gandhiji said, "If Sri Bade does not obey the President and wishes to keep standing, he may do so; we all will get up and leave." And indeed when Gandhiji, Ajmal Khan, Jinnah (he was present in this session too) began to walk out, the whole pandal became empty. Only Bade Sahāt became bade (great) and stood there.

Thus, Gandhiji showed in an unusual way the power of co-operation inside the country and the power of non-co-operation against the British Government. We should reflect on this even in the present times.

In order to organise the country's inner strength, Gandhiji used to stress national unity and to bring about unity in Hindu society he emphasised the abolition of untouchability and he would even stake his life for it—all this is common knowledge.

Now I shall cite only one more example and conclude this article. After meeting in Calcutta, the Congress was to assemble in Lahore. Despite its endeavours, the Swaraj Party too was becoming despondent. There was no alternative to law-breaking or satyagraha—this was the experience of men of all shades of opinion in the Congress who believed that if satyagraha was to be launched, no one except Gandhiji could be its leader. Therefore, the Congress Working Committee proposed Gandhiji's name for the presidency of the Lahore session. At this time the youth began to demand "complete independence". Gandhiji wanted to keep clear of this expression. He attached more importance to "deeds" than to "words" but he sensed that if he became President of the Lahore session, there would be unnecessary discussion on the expression "complete independence". Hence he got Jawaharlal to be President. In this way he cleverly avoided possible conflict with youth. Whenever there arose any internal conflict in the Congress or the country, Gandhiji attempted to stop it at any price. This only made his inner co-operation strong and he fought the iron strength of a foreign empire by means of non-cooperation and satyagraha as also civil disobedience which is a special aspect of non-cooperation and in the end the Britishers had to leave India bag and baggage. And yet Englishmen till today look on Gandhiji as a great man and some even regard him as a modern Christ. This miracle was also the result of his non-violent non-cooperation.

Translated from the Hindi.

Ushering in New Era

INDULAL YAJNIK

HAPPY MEMORIES crowd my mind after a lapse of 50 years as I think of the non-cooperation movement carried on by Gandhiji in 1920-21.

It was at the Khilafat Conference that met in Delhi in November 1919 that the idea of a non-cooperation movement was first mooted by Gandhiji. The conference which was largely attended by Muslim *Ulama* and other divines desired to carry on a campaign against the British Government which had imposed its iron heel on many Muslim lands in violation of its solemn promises during the war to uphold the freedom of the Arabs. They were actuated by a passionate desire to restore the political as well as the religious sovereignty of the effete Sultan of Turkey over the Muslim world.

Naturally the conference decided to carry on propaganda with a view to compelling the Government to restore the authority of the Khalifa. It further resolved to urge both Hindus and Muslims to take the swadeshi vow and to boycott foreign goods. This conference proved historic by its war cry of non-cooperation which was raised during the session by Gandhiji. "I described it," he wrote, "by the word non-cooperation, an expression that I used for the first time at this meeting....It was vain to talk about effective resistance to a Government with which he was co-operating if resort to arms was impossible or undesirable. The only true resistance to the Government, it therefore seemed to me, was to cease to co-operate with it. Thus I arrived at the word non-co-operation."

As Gandhiji was then engaged on the work of the Punjab Disorders Enquiry Committee, he naturally took a leading part in the Congress that was held at Amritsar in December 1919 under the presidentship of Pandit Motilal Nehru. A battle

ensued at the conference between Moderates like Pandit Malaviya and Extremists like Lokamanya Tilak and Deshbandhu Das who thought that the reforms should be rejected. Finally at Gandhiji's suggestion the Congress passed a resolution, criticising the reforms as unsatisfactory and yet urging the people to make the best use of the reforms for the progress of the country. The Congress also appointed a small committee, under the chairmanship of Gandhiji to frame a new constitution for the Congress.

Gandhiji was busy writing the Punjab report in the winter of 1920. When I once approached him for some work, he told me that he worked twenty hours a day as it was absolutely necessary to publish the Punjab report as soon as possible. When I asked him how he could work with so little rest, he replied that it was incredibly simple. The less you eat, he said, the less you sleep and more you work. Gandhiji was also engaged at the same time in carrying on a thundering propaganda in his papers *Young India* and *Navajivan* for popularising the non-cooperation movement in connection with the Khilafat movement. Most of the leading workers in Gujarat, however, could not feel enthusiastic about Gandhiji's Khilafat propaganda. Sardar Patel was also sceptical about it. Imagine, he once said, our fighting for the independence of the Arabs of Arabia and Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia when we ourselves were held as slaves under the British bayonets in our own land!

In March 1920 Gandhiji published the Punjab report. The report truly electrified the whole country as it made startling disclosures of the most monstrous tortures and barbarities that had been perpetrated by Government officers in the Punjab. The Committee asked for the recall of the Viceroy and dismissal from service of the Governor of the Punjab and of General Dyer, the perpetrator of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

In May 1920 the terms of the Treaty of Sevres with Turkey were published and caused the deepest indignation in the country. The official Hunter Committee report which whitewashed Government atrocities in the Punjab was also published about the same time. The Khilafat Committee met at

Bombay on May 28 to consider the terms of the Turkish Treaty. Gandhiji outlined at that conference four stages of the non-cooperation movement: (1) giving up titles and honorary posts; (2) withdrawal from Government service; (3) withdrawal from the police and military forces; and (4) suspension of payment of taxes. A sub-committee appointed by the Committee decided to give one month's notice to the British Government that in the event of no satisfaction being received regarding the Khilafat claim, the Musalmans of India would be compelled to inaugurate the campaign of non-cooperation from August 1, 1920.

On May 30 the All India Congress Committee met at Banaras to discuss the Hunter report and the Turkish peace terms. After a long debate it decided to hold a special session of the Congress to consider Gandhiji's new non-cooperation programme. Meanwhile Gandhiji carried on his campaign for the four-point non-cooperation programme which failed to inspire us in Gujarat.

The beginning of July 1920, however, brought us new inspirations. Writing in his Urdu paper *Bande Mataram*, Lala Lajpat Rai called for a complete boycott of legislative councils as the time had not yet come for Indians and Europeans to work together for the good of the country. He proclaimed that no self-respecting Indian could shake hands with English officials whose hands had been stained with the blood of our brothers and sisters. Promptly, Gandhiji responded to Lalaji's call and included the boycott of legislatures in his non-cooperation programme. What is more, he now published the following additional programme: (1) non-participation in Government loans; (2) boycott of reformed councils; (3) boycott of courts by lawyers and litigants and settlement of civil disputes by private arbitration; (4) boycott of Government schools by parents and students; (5) non-participation in Government parties; and (5) swadeshi propaganda.

This full-fledged political programme inspired us to join enthusiastically the new movement. I lost no time in convening a meeting of the Gujarat Political Committee which adopted a resolution heartily supporting the whole non-cooperation programme. Now Gandhiji was anxious to convene a special

conference in Gujarat to adopt the full non-cooperation programme ahead of the rest of India. So the Gujarat Political Conference met at Ahmedabad under the presidentship of Abbas Tyabji, a member of the Punjab Enquiry Committee. The conference enthusiastically adopted the non-cooperation resolution with thundering cheers. The conference also decided to set up a national university to take up the work of organising national schools and colleges in Gujarat.

The special session of the Congress was held in the beginning of September at Calcutta under the presidentship of the veteran patriot, Lala Lajpat Rai. Gandhiji drafted his resolution on non-cooperation while we were travelling with him by a special train. In the first draft prepared by him he called for the rectification of the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs. But many of us thought it absolutely necessary that the demand for swaraj should be included in the resolution. Gandhiji gladly agreed to include the sovereign demand for swaraj in his resolution. In the Calcutta session Gandhiji called for securing swaraj within one year and also for the adoption of swadeshi in cotton piecegoods, thus virtually calling for a boycott of all foreign cloth. He further added a clause for the removal of untouchability for the self-purification of the people who would desire to enjoy freedom.

Armed with his epoch-making resolution Gandhiji went to the Congress Subjects Committee to face the most formidable opposition of veteran Congress leaders. He virtually placed the committee on the defensive by stating that he and the Muslims had already begun to carry out the entire non-co-operation programme in spite of any verdict the Congress might give.

The atmosphere in the committee was almost electrified. The Ali brothers, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Hakim Ajmal Khan were on his side. But the veterans of the Congress including Deshbandhu Das, Bipin Chandra Pal, Pandit Malaviva, Jinnah and Mrs Besant were ranged on the other side. The debate proved indeed exhaustive, serious and somewhat stormy. But Gandhiji, replying to the debate, effectively demolished the entire edifice built up by his able opponents. His speech remains in my memory as the ablest and most convincing masterpiece.

of his oratory. The non-cooperation resolution was adopted by the committee and then at the open session of the Congress by a big majority amidst thundering applause.

Elections were due very shortly after this session and the Congress resolution on the boycott of the councils would be put to a severe test by the people and the Government. Luckily Das and other leaders of the opposing minority sprang an agreeable surprise by issuing a manifesto expressly renouncing all desire to stand for elections to the councils. Other dissenting leaders like Vithalbhai Patel followed the lead of Das in rapid succession. Thus the first programme for the boycott of legislatures proved a great success.

The boycott of courts was announced by some leading lawyers like Pandit Motilal Nehru and Deshbandhu Das. In Gandhiji's opinion no one co-operates with the Government more than lawyers who are styled as officers of the court.

Gandhiji also toured the country to persuade the people to boycott Government schools and colleges. He addressed the students of the Aligarh Muslim University and the Banaras Hindu University. All that he could secure was the establishment of new national colleges at some centres in India. In Gujarat, of course, the Gujarat National University was founded in November and a National College was inaugurated under its auspices. While some high schools were affiliated with the new university in Gujarat, no general success could be claimed for this programme.

Naturally we toured many parts of Gujarat to make a success of the triple boycott. We were specially engaged in securing the disaffiliation of high schools from the Government and the Bombay University and in setting up new educational institutions, primary and secondary, under the auspices of the new Gujarat University. Here again, we secured a measure of success though it could not be described as very satisfactory.

The beginning of January 1921 found us busy with the organisation of a Provincial Congress Committee for Gujarat under the new Congress constitution. We were so happy to have our own Congress organisation which replaced the Bombay Committee to which we had been tied up till then. I

joined Sardar Patel and Dadasaheb Mavalankar in drafting the constitution of our Gujarat Congress. Very soon a large number of members were enrolled from many parts of Gujarat and I was elected with Dadasaheb Mavalankar as Secretary of the Gujarat Congress Committee, while Sardar Patel was elected President.

I secured the valuable friendship of Principal Gidwani who was appointed Head of our new National College. He often addressed public meetings on the sands of the Sabarmati river and made it a point to refer to Lenin and Gandhi as the two greatest men of the world. A great scholar and socialist, Principal Gidwani often accompanied me on my tours in Gujarat. Being officially connected with the Gujarat National University, I joined him in securing valuable help from rich merchants to equip our institution with a first-class library. I remember having accompanied him to the house of S. R. Bommanji, a Bombay philanthropist, and secured rupees ten thousand which were largely spent by Gidwaniji in buying modern and socialist literature.

While I was thus engaged in co-operating with Gidwaniji and many other colleagues in developing a system of sound national education in Gujarat, I was thunderstruck by a statement that was issued by Gandhiji in January 1921. On the plea of winning swaraj within one year, Gandhiji asked the students all over India to suspend their normal studies, as in wartime, for one year and devote their time to the manufacture of yarn by hand-spinning. Only two months had passed since Gandhiji had placed before us the golden vision of a national university which would not only rescue the Indian vernaculars from unmerited oblivion and make them the foundation of national regeneration of Indian culture, but would promote a systematic study of Asian cultures which was not less essential than the study of Western sciences for a complete education for life. Naturally this rightabout turn to convert our national educational institutions into factories for promoting hand-spinning came to us as a rude shock. Luckily Principal Gidwani hit upon the idea of starting a separate seminar for giving special training to students who would volunteer to work in villages and who would also acquire basic training in spinning to enable them to start national schools

in rural areas. I heartily co-operated with Gidwaniji in training students for his new institution. Within a few months this new seminar gave me a large number of volunteers to carry on educational as well as Congress work in many areas.

While I made a virtue of the new necessity imposed by Gandhiji, the wholesale conversion of educational institutions into spinning schools rankled in my mind. I saw with dismay that the new spinning programme that had been undertaken at many schools helped to produce very bad and uneven yarn which could not be used for weaving. Within a few months the new schools began to be closed down and the spinning-wheels were put in godowns. As I got out of tune with the prime activity of the Gujarat Vidyapith, I finally decided to resign my membership of the Senate of the new university.

Meanwhile Gandhiji worked with might and main as he was determined to make a success of the non-cooperation movement which was designed to secure swaraj before December 31, 1921. A meeting of the All India Congress Committee was convened at Bezwada in March 1921 to chalk out a programme of work for the following three months. The committee decided that the Congress should raise rupees one crore for the Swaraj Fund, enroll one crore members for the Congress and set 20 lakhs of spinning-wheels at work in the country before the 30th of June. The quota of funds, membership and spinning-wheels was specified for the different Provincial Congress Committees. Our Congress Committee had to collect Rs 15 lakhs from our districts and the States which were associated with us. Our friend Manilal Kothari was considered an audacious expert in the collection of funds. I often accompanied him for the collection of funds in several areas. Sardar Patel and other workers exerted themselves to the utmost to collect funds. The result was that we did succeed in completing our quota of the fund.

While we were engaged in making a success of the Bezwada programme, we organised a session of the Gujarat Political Conference at Broach in June. Mrs Sarojini Naidu and Maulana Mahomed Ali attended the session with Gandhiji. My special contribution at the conference consisted in making a

stirring appeal for mobilising young men to volunteer in the service of the nation.

On return from Broach I was beset with new difficulties and differences with Sardar Patel. The 40 odd volunteers whom I had placed in different districts of Gujarat began to send me reports of the prevalence of scarcity and partial famine conditions on the eve of the rainy season. My request for adequate funds to send relief to the affected areas met with very scant response from Sardar Patel. The cry for relief from the rural areas became acute in the beginning of June. I went round the Broach and Panchmahals districts and placed my demand of Rs 1,17,000 before the Provincial Congress Committee. Receiving no response from my president I turned to Gandhiji for help. It was at his instance that the committee after hearing the testimony of some practical-minded leaders sanctioned the amount asked for by me and invested me with full powers to spend the money according to my discretion.

Having collected rupees one crore by the 30th June, Gandhiji did not rest on his oars. While the Khilafat Conference adopted a resolution at Karachi declaring it unlawful for any faithful Musalman to serve from that day in the army, Gandhiji hastened to publish a new programme of boycotting foreign cloth by burning it in big bonfires. Naturally this new programme caught the imagination of the people by its striking novelty. The All India Congress Committee that met by the end of July duly adopted the programme that was already being propagated by Gandhiji from the beginning of the month. This meeting also decided to carry on a campaign against the sale and use of liquors by a peaceful boycott. Even greater importance was attached to the proposed boycott of the Prince of Wales who was expected to arrive in India during the next few months.

Meanwhile big preparations were held for staging the first big bonfire at Bombay. Congress volunteers and workers joined students of the national schools to collect bundles of foreign cloth from the rich and the poor. European suits and hats, collars and ties were also collected in big quantities. The foreign fineries of women including saris in beautiful colours were also thrown on the big heap at the Elphinstone Mill com-

pound. A vast concourse numbering hundreds of thousands gathered on the 31st July to behold the ceremony of lighting the first and perhaps the biggest bonfire. As the flames leapt up and enveloped the whole pyramid, there was a shout of joy resounding all round. A glow of freedom lighted up thousands of faces.

On return from Bombay I naturally joined Sardar Patel and other friends in touring Gujarat and giving the new message of the Congress. I was engaged in collecting large piles of foreign cloth and setting them on fire in many towns of Gujarat.

The beginning of August however found me again at loggerheads with Sardar Patel. True to the message of Gandhiji, I had by that time organised a large number of schools and hostels for the children of the Harijans and Adivasis. I submitted a budget of Rs 25,000 for the maintenance of these institutions for the next year. Sardar Patel got very much annoyed with me for carrying out such an expensive programme while we were in the midst of the freedom struggle. He turned over my budget papers to the Gujarat Vidyapith which ultimately decided to sanction a small amount of Rs 5,000 for all my institutions. I declined to receive that amount and appealed to Gandhiji in the matter.

Sardar Patel knew that I would secure justice ultimately from Gandhiji. He therefore asked me how long I would continue to approach Gandhiji for everything. Stung to the quick by these remarks, I submitted my resignation from the secretaryship of the Gujarat Congress Committee.

I could now view Congress affairs from afar. A meeting of the A.I.C.C. was held at Delhi in December. By that time repression was started by the Government in many States and the question of disobeying Government orders was uppermost in the minds of members. The committee resolved to give necessary powers to the provincial committees to promote satyagraha under certain conditions.

There were riots in Bombay when the Prince landed at the Gateway of India there in November. Gandhiji went on a fast for pacifying the people. In Gujarat we were busy organising

the annual session of the Congress which was to meet during the Christmas week.

The month of December began with the wholesale arrests of Lajpat Rai, Deshbandhu Das, the President-elect of the Ahmedabad Congress, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and thousands of other volunteers in all parts of the country. By that time the Government was obsessed with the determination to prevent a general hartal on December 24, the day of the arrival of the Prince of Wales in Calcutta. Not content with the wholesale arrests of Congress leaders and volunteers, the Government proceeded to arrest Das's wife, his widowed sister and niece in Calcutta. On receipt of this news Gandhiji was overjoyed. He stated that the Bengal Government in its impartial zeal to make no distinction even of sex had conferred great honour upon these three women of Calcutta. He hoped that the whole country would welcome this innovation. He concluded with the astounding words: "Swaraj is within our grasp. Let it not step away from us by self-forgetfulness."

I remember I went to Gandhiji to see him at his Ashram about the time the news of the arrest of these women was received by him. His spirit was roused as never before on receipt of the news. He truly felt that his mission for the year was fulfilled and that swaraj was round the corner. In fact, throughout the proceedings of the Congress which met soon afterwards, Gandhiji never showed any disappointment over the non-attainment of swaraj by the end of the year. He truly felt that in the arrest of these distinguished women of Bengal the substance of swaraj had been achieved by India.

With these words I have to conclude my reminiscences of the non-cooperation movement. For I was busy with other activities towards the end of 1921 and the beginning of 1922 when Gandhiji sent his ultimatum to the Viceroy for starting a mass satyagraha in Bardoli, then withdrew the ultimatum within a few days and was later sentenced to six years' imprisonment for publication of some articles in *Young India*.

